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No Defense*

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"The Judgment House," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY C. D. WILLIAMS

"WELL, good-by, Dyck. I'll meet you at the sessions, or before that at the assizes."

It was only the impulsive, cheery, warning exclamation of a wild young Irish spirit to his friend Dyck Calhoun, but it had behind it the humor and incongruity of Irish life.

The man, Dyck Calhoun, after whom were sent the daring words about the sessions and the assizes, was a year or two older than his friend, and, as Michael Clones, his servant and friend, said, "the worst and best scamp of them all"—just up to any harmless deviltry.

Influenced by no traditions or customs, under control of no stern records of society, Calhoun had caused some trouble in his time by the harmless deeds of a scapegrace, but morally—that is, in all relations of life affected by the ten commandments—he

was above reproach. Yet he was of the sort who, in days of agitation, then common in Ireland, might possibly commit some act which would bring him to the sessions or the assizes. There never was in Ireland a cheerier, braver, handsomer fellow, nor one with such variety of mind and complexity of purpose.

He was the only child of a high-placed gentleman; he spent all the money that came his way, and occasionally loaded himself with debt, which his angry father paid. Yet there never was a gayer heart, a more generous spirit, nor an easier-tempered man; though, after all, he was only twenty-five when the words with which the tale opens were said to him.

He had been successful—yet none too successful—at school and Trinity College, Dublin. He had taken a pass degree, when he might have captured the highest honors.

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He had interested people of place in the country, but he never used promptly the interest he excited. A pretty face, a fishing or a shooting expedition, a carouse in some secluded tavern, were parts of his daily life.

At the time the story opens he was a figure of note among those who spent their time in criticising the government and damning the Irish Parliament. He even became a friend of some young hare-brained rebels of the time; yet no one suspected him of anything except irresponsibility. His record was clean; Dublin Castle was not after him.

When his young friend made the remark about the sessions and assizes, Calhoun was making his way up the rocky hillside to take the homeward path to his father's place, Playmore. With the challenge and the monstrous good-by, a stone came flying up the hill after him and stopped almost at his feet. He made no reply, however, but waved a hand downhill, and in his heart said:

"Well, maybe he's right. I'm a damned dangerous fellow, there's no doubt about that. Perhaps I'll kill a patriot or a rebel some day, and then they'll take me to the sessions and the assizes. Well, well, there's many a worse fate than that, so there is."

After a minute he added:

"So there is, dear lad, so there is. But if I ever kill, I'd like it to be in open fight on the hills like this—like this, under the bright sun, in the soft morning, with all the moor and valleys still, and the larks singing—the larks singing! Hooray, but it's a fine day, one of the best that ever was!"

He laughed, and patted his gun gently.

"Not a feather, not a bird killed, not a shot fired; but the looking was the thing—stalking the things that never turned up, the white heels we never saw, for I'm not killing larks, God love you!"

He raised his head, looking up into the sky at some larks singing above him in the heavens.

"God love you, little dears," he added aloud. "I wish I might die with your singing in my ears, but do you know what makes Ireland what it is? Look at it now. Years ago, just when the cotton-mills and the linen-mills were doing well, they came over with their English legisla-



HE SAID TO HER:
"AND WHAT'S YOUR NAME?"

tion, and made it hard going. When we begin to get something, over the English come and take the something away. What have we done, we Irish people, that we shouldn't have a chance in our own country? Lord knows, we deserve a chance, for it's hard paying the duties these days. What with France in revolution and reaching out her hand to Ireland to coax her into rebellion; what with defeat in America and drink in Scotland; what with Fox and Pitt at each other's throats, and the lord lieutenant a danger to the peace; what with poverty, and the cow and children and father and mother

living all in one room, with the chickens roosting in the rafters; what with pointing the potato at the fried fish and gulping it down as if it was fish itself; what with the smell and the dirt and the poverty of Dublin and Derry, Limerick and Cork—ah, well!" He threw his eyes up again. "Ah, well, my little love, sing on! You're a blessing among a lot of curses; but never mind, it's a fine world, and Ireland's the best part of it. Heaven knows it—and on this hill, how beautiful it is!"

He was now on



"I'M SHEILA LLYN,
THE DAUGHTER OF A
WIDOW VISITING AT
LOYLAND TOWERS"

the top of a hill where he could look out toward the bog and in toward the mellow, waving hills. He could drink in the yellowish green, with here and there in the distance a little house; and about two miles away smoke stealing up from the midst of the plantation where Playmore was—Playmore, his father's house—to be his own one day.

How good it was! There, within his

sight, was the great escarpment of rock known as the Devil's Ledge, and away to the east was the black spot in the combe known as the Cave of Mary. Still farther away, toward the south, was the great cattle-pasture, where, as he looked, a thousand cattle roamed. Here and there in the wide prospect were plantations where Irish landlords lived, and paid a heavy price for living. Men did not pay their rents. Crops were spoiled, markets were bad, money was scarce, yet—

"Please God, it will be better next year!" Michael Clones said, and there never was a man with a more hopeful heart than Michael Clones.

Dyck Calhoun had a soul of character, originality, and wayward distinction. He had all the impulses and enthusiasms of a poet, all the thirst for excitement of the adventurer, all the latent patriotism of the true Celt; but his life was undisciplined, and he had not ordered his spirit into compartments of faith and hope. He had gifts. They were gifts only to be borne by those who had ambitions.

Now, as he looked out upon the scene where nature was showing herself at her best, some glimmer of a great future came to him. He did not know which way his feet were destined to travel in the business of life. It was too late to join the navy; but there was still time enough to be a soldier, or to learn to be a lawyer.

"I'll meet you at the sessions, or before that at the assizes!" his friend had said.

Did that mean he might become a great judge, or a lawyer with a big name? No, it had been thrown at him in gay insult. But life to-day was a wonderful thing—apart, dominant, and beautiful.

As he gazed upon the scene, his wonderful deep blue eyes, his dark brown hair thick upon his head, waving and luxuriant

like a fine mattress, his tall, slender, alert figure, his bony, capable hands, which neither sun nor wind ever browned, his nervous yet interesting mouth, and his long Roman nose, set in a complexion rich in its pink-and-cream hardness and health—all this made him a figure good to see.

Suddenly, as he listened to the lark singing overhead, with his face lifted to the sky, he heard a human voice singing; and presently there ran up a little declivity to his left a girl—a young Irish girl of about seventeen years of age.

Her hat was hanging on her arm by a green ribbon. Her head was covered with the most wonderful brown, waving hair. She had a broad, low forehead, Greek in its proportions and lines. The eyes were bluer even than his own, and were shaded by lashes of great length, which slightly modified the firm lines of the face, with its admirable chin and mouth somewhat large, with a cupid's bow.

In spite of its ardent and luscious look, it was the mouth of one who knew her own mind and could sustain her own course. It was open when Dyck first saw it, because she was singing little bits of wild lyrics of the hills, little tragedies of Celtic life—just bursts of the Celtic soul, as it were, cheerful yet sad, buoyant yet passionate, eager yet melancholy. She was singing in Irish, too. They were the words of songs taught her by her mother's maid.

She had been tramping over the hills for a couple of hours, virile, beautiful, and alone. She wore a gown of dark gold, with little green ribbons here and there. The gown was short, and her ankles showed. In spite of the strong boots she wore they were alert, delicate, and shapely, and all her beauty had the slender fulness of a quail.

When she saw Dyck, she stopped suddenly, her mouth still slightly open. She looked at him with a sidelong glance, with wonder, interest, and speculation. Then she threw her head slightly back, and all the curls gathered in a bunch and shook like bronze flowers. It was a head of grace and power, of charm and allurements—of danger.

Dyck was lost in admiration. He looked at her as one might look at a beautiful vision in a dream. He did not speak; he only smiled as he gazed into her eyes.

She was the first to speak.

"Well, who are you?" she asked with a

slightly southern accent in her voice, delicate and entrancing.

Her head gave a little modest toss, her fine white teeth caught her lower lip with a little quirk of humor; for she could see that he was a gentleman, and that she was safe from anything that might trouble her.

He could not but remark how soft and pleasant her voice was. He replied to her question with the words:

"My name? Why, it's Dyck Calhoun. That's all."

Her eyes brightened.

"Isn't that enough?" she asked gently.

She knew of his family. She was only visiting in the district with her mother, but she had lately heard of old Miles Calhoun and his wayward, wanton boy, Dyck; and here was Dyck, with a humor in his eyes and a touch of melancholy at his lips. Somehow her heart went out to him.

Presently he said to her:

"And what's your name?"

"I'm only Sheila Llyn, the daughter of my mother, a widow, visiting at Loyland Towers. Yes, I'm only Sheila!"

She laughed.

"Well, just be 'only Sheila,'" he answered admiringly, and he held out a hand to her. "I wouldn't have you be anything else, though it's none of my business."

For one swift instant she hesitated; then she laid her hand in his.

"There's no reason why we should not," she said. "Your father's respectable."

She looked at him again with her side-long glance, and with a whimsical, reserved smile at her lips.

"Yes, he's respectable, I agree, but he's dull," answered Dyck. "For an Irishman, he's dull—and he's a tyrant, too. I suppose I deserve that, for I'm a handful."

"I think you are, and a big handful, too!"

"Which way are you going?" he asked presently.

"And you?"

"Oh, I'm bound for home." He pointed across the valley. "Do you see that smoke coming up from the plantation over there?"

"Yes, I know," she answered. "I know. That's Playmore, your father's place. Loyland Towers is between here and there. Which way were you going there?"

"Round to the left," he said, puzzled, but agreeable.

"Then we must say good-by, because I go to the right. That's my nearest way."

"Well, if that's your nearest way, I'm going with you," he said, "because—well, because—because—"

"If you won't talk very much!" she rejoined with a little air of reserve and instinctive coquetry.

"I don't want to talk. I'd like to listen. Shall we start?"

A half-hour later they suddenly came upon an incident of the road.

It was, alas, no uncommon incident. An aged peasant, in a sudden fit of weakness, had stumbled on the road, and, in falling, had struck his head on a stone and had lost consciousness. He was an old peasant of the usual Irish type, coarsely but cleanly dressed. Lying beside him was a leather bag, within which were odds and ends of food and some small books of legend and ritual. He was a peasant of a superior class, however.

In falling, he had thrown over on his back, and his haggard, bearded face was exposed to the sun and sky. At sight of him Dyck and Sheila ran forward. Dyck dropped on one knee, and placed a hand on the stricken man's heart.

"He's alive, all right," Dyck said. "He's a figure in these parts. His name's Christopher Dogan."

"Where does he live?" asked Sheila.

"Live? Well, not three hundred yards from here, when he's at home, but he's generally on the go. He's what the American Indians would call a medicine-man. People hereabouts call him the Doctor Man."

"He needs to take his own medicine now."

"He's over eighty, and he must have gone dizzy, stumbled, fallen, and struck a stone. There's the mark on his temple. He's been lying here unconscious ever since; but his pulse is all right, and we'll have him fit again soon."

So saying, Dyck whipped out a horn containing spirit, and, while Sheila lifted the injured head, he bathed the old man's face with the spirit, then opened the mouth and let the liquor trickle down.

"He's the cleanest peasant I ever saw," remarked Sheila; "and he's coming to. Look at him!"

Yes, he was coming to. There was a slight tremor of the eyelids, and presently they slowly opened. They were eyes of remarkable poignancy and brightness—

black, deep-set, direct, full of native intelligence. For an instant they stared as if they had no knowledge, then understanding came to them.

"Oh, it's you, sir," his voice said tremblingly, looking at Dyck. "And very kind it is of ye!" Then he looked at Sheila. "I don't know ye," he said whisperingly, for his voice seemed suddenly to fail. "I don't know ye," he repeated, "but you look all right."

"Well, I'm Sheila Llyn," the girl said, taking her hand from the old man's shoulder. "I'm Sheila Llyn, and I'm all right in a way, I think."

The troubled, piercing eyes glanced from one to the other.

"No relation?"

"No—never met till a half-hour ago," remarked Dyck. "We've been going it since, but we were strangers till then."

The old man drew himself to a sitting posture, then swayed slightly. The hands of the girl and Dyck went out behind the old man's back. As they touched his back, their fingers met, and Dyck's covered the girl's. Their eyes met, too, and the story told by Dyck in that moment was the beginning of a lifetime of experience, comedy, and tragedy.

He thought her fingers were wonderfully soft, warm, and full of life; and she thought that his was the hand of a master—of a master in the field of human relation. That is, if she thought at all, for Dyck's warm, powerful touch almost hypnotized her.

The old peasant understood, however. He was standing on his feet now. He was very pale and uncertain. He lifted up his bag, and threw it haphazardly over his shoulder.

"Well, I'm not needing you any more, thank God!" he continued. "So Heaven's blessing on ye, and I bid ye good-by. You've been kind to me, and I won't forget either of ye. If ever I can do ye a good turn, I'll do it."

"Oh, no, we're not going to leave you until you're inside your home," said Dyck.

The old man looked at Sheila in meditation. He knew her name and her history. Behind the girl's life was a long prospect of mystery. Llyn was her mother's maiden name. Sheila had never known her father. Never to her knowledge had she seen him, because when she was yet an infant her mother had divorced him, and had resumed her maiden name.

Sheila's father's name was Erris Boyne, and he had been debauched, drunken, and faithless; so at a time of unendurable hurt his wife had divorced him. Then, under the egis of her maiden name, she had brought up her daughter without any knowledge of her father; had made her believe that he was dead; had hidden the tragedy of the past with a skilful hand.

Only now, when Sheila was released from school and a governess, had she moved out of the little wild area of the County Limerick where she lived; only now had she come to visit an uncle whose hospitality she had for so many years denied herself. Sheila was two years old when her father disappeared, and fifteen years had gone since then.

One on either side of the old man, they went with him up the hillside for about three hundred yards, to the door of his house, which was little more than a cave in a sudden lift of the hill. He swayed as he walked, but by the time they reached his cave-house he was alert again.

The house had two windows, one on either side of the unlocked doorway; and when the old man slowly swung the door open, there was shown an interior of humble character, but neat and well-ordered. The floor was earth, dry and clean. There was a bed to the right, also wholesome and dry, with horse-blankets for cover. At the back, opposite the doorway, was a fireplace of some size, and in it stood a kettle, a pot, and a few small pans, together with a covered saucepan. On either side of the fireplace was a three-legged stool, and about the middle of the left-hand wall of the room was a chair which had been made out of a barrel, some of the staves having been sawn away to make a seat.

Once inside the house, Christopher Dogan laid his bag on the bed and waved his hands in a formula of welcome.

"Well, I'm honored," he said, "for no one has set foot inside this place that I'd rather have here than the two of ye; and it's wonderful to me, Mr. Calhoun, that ye've never been inside it before, because there's been times when I've had food and dhrink in plenty. I could have made ye comfortable then and stroked ye all down yer gullet. As for you, Miss Llyn, you're as welcome as the shining of the stars of a night when there's no moon. I'm glad you're here, though I've nothing to give ye, not a bite nor a sup. Ah, yes—but yes,"

he suddenly cried, touching his head. "Faith, then, I have! I have a drap of somethin' that's as good as anything dhrunk by the ancient kings of Ireland. It's a wee cordial that come from the cellars of the Bishop of Dunsany, when I cured his cook of the evil-stone that was killing her. Ah, thank God!"

He went into a corner on the left of the fireplace, opened an old jar, thrust his arm down, and drew out a squat little bottle of cordial. The bottle was beautifully made. It was round and hunched, and of glass, with an old label from which the writing had faded.

With eyes bright now, Christopher uncorked the bottle and smelled the contents. As he did so, a smile of good cheer crinkled his bearded face.

"Thank the Lord!" he said. "There's enough for the two of ye—two fine tablespoonfuls of the cordial that 'd do anny man good, no matter how bad he was, and turn an angel of a woman into an archangel. Bless yer sowl!"

When Christopher turned to lift down two pewter pots, Calhoun reached up swiftly and took them from the shelf. He placed them in the hands of the old man, who drew a clean towel of coarse linen from a small cupboard in the wall above his head.

She and Dyck held the pots for the old man to pour the cordial into them. As he said, there was only a good porridge-spoon of liqueur for each. He divided it with anxious care.

"There's manny a man," he said, "and manny and manny a lady, too, born in the purple, that 'd be glad of a dhrink of this cordial from the cellar of the bishop. *Alpha, beta, gamma, delta* is the code, and with the word *delta*," he continued, "dhrink every drop of it, as if it was the last thing you were dhrinking on earth; as if the Lord stooped down to give ye a cup of blessing from His great flagon of eternal happiness. Ye've got two kind hearts, but there's manny a day of throuble will come between ye and the end; and yet the end 'll be right, God love ye! Now—*alpha, beta, gamma, delta!*"

With a merry laugh Dyck Calhoun turned up his cup and drained the liquid to the last drop. With a laugh not quite so merry, but merry enough, Sheila raised her mug and slowly drained the green happiness away.

"Isn't it good—isn't it like the love of God?" asked the old man. "Ain't I glad I had it for ye? Why I said I hadn't annything for ye to dhrink or eat, God only knows. There's nothing to eat, and there's only this to dhrink, and I chuck it away under the bedclothes of time, as one might say. Ah, ye know, it's been there for three years, and I'd almost forgotten it. It was just a little angel from heaven whispered it to me whin ye stepped inside this house. I dunno why I kep' the stuff. Manny's the time I was tempted to dhrink it myself, and manny's the time something said to me, 'Not yet.' The Lord be praised, for I've had out of it more than I deserve!"

He took the mugs from their hands, and for a minute stood like some ancient priest who had performed a noble ritual. As Sheila looked at him, she kept saying to herself:

"He's a spirit; he isn't a man!"

Dyck's eye met that of Sheila, and he saw with the same feeling what was working in her heart.

"Well, we must be going," he said to Christopher Dogan. "We must get homeward, and we've had a good drink—the best I ever tasted. We're proud to pay our respects to you in your own house; and good-by to you till we meet again."

His hand went out to the shoulder of the peasant and rested there for a second in friendly feeling. Then the girl stretched out her hand also. The old man took the two cups in one hand, and, reaching out the other, let Sheila's fingers fall upon his own. He slowly crooked his neck, and kissed her fingers with that distinction mostly to be found among those few good people who live on the highest or the lowest social levels, or in native tents.

"Ah, please God we meet again!" he said. "Please God that I be let to serve you, Miss Sheila Llyn. I have no doubt that you could do with a little help some time or another, the same as the rest of us. For all that's come between us three, may it be given me, humble and poor, to help ye both that's helped me so!"

Dyck turned to go, and as he did so a thought came to him.

"If you hadn't food and drink for us, what have you for yourself, Christopher?" he asked. "Have you food to eat?"

"Ah, well—well, do ye think I'm no provider? There was no food cooked was

what I was thinking; but come and let me show you."

He took the cover off a jar standing in a corner.

"Here's good flour," he said; "and there's water, and there's manny a wild shrub and plant on the hillside to make soup, and what more does a man want? With the scone cooked and inside ye, don't ye feel as well as though ye'd had a pound of beef or a rasher of bacon? Sure, ye do. I know where there's clumps of wild radishes, and with a little salt they're good—the best. God bless ye!"

A few moments later, as he stood in his doorway and looked along the road, he saw the two figures, the girl's head hardly higher than the man's shoulder. They walked as if they had much to get and were ready for it.

"Well, I dunno," he said to himself. "I dunno about you, Dyck Calhoun. You're wild, and ye have too manny mad friends, but you'll come all right in the end; and that pretty girl—God bless her and save her!—she'll come with a smile into your arms by and by, dear lad. But ye have far to go and much to do before that."

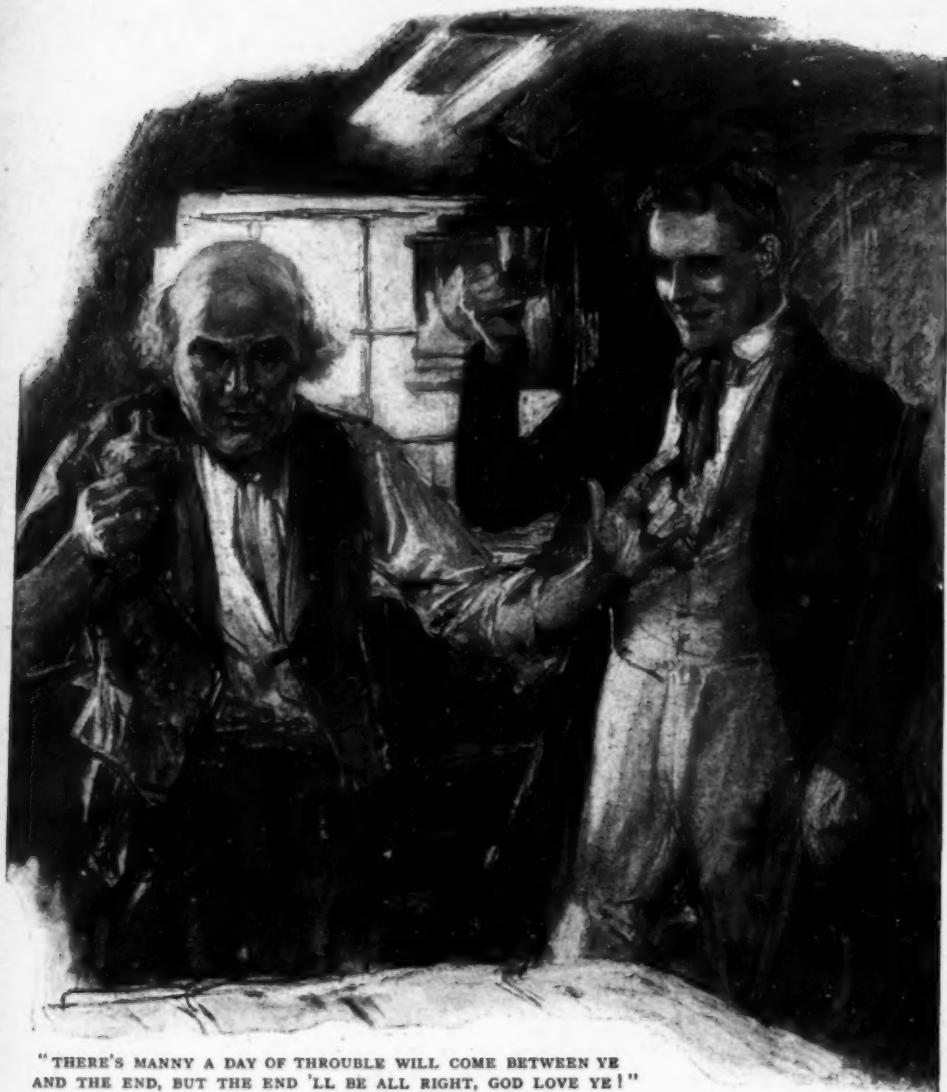
His head fell, his eyes stared out into the shining distance.

"I see for ye manny and manny a stroke of bad luck, and manny a wrong thing said of ye, and she not believing wan of them. But oh, my God, but oh!"—his clenched hands went to his eyes—"I wouldn't like to travel the path that's before ye—no!"

Down the long road the two young people traveled, gossiping much, both of them touched by something sad and mysterious, neither knowing why; both of them happy, too, for somehow they had come nearer together than years of ordinary life might have made possible. They thought of the old man and his hut, and then broke away into talk of their own countryside, of the war with France, of the growing rebellious spirit in Ireland, of riots in Dublin town, of trouble at Limerick, Cork, and Sligo.

At the gate of the mansion where Sheila was visiting, Dyck put into her hands the wild flowers that he had picked as they passed, and said:

"Well, it's been a great day. I've never had a greater. Let's meet again, and soon! I'm almost every day upon the hill with my gun, and it'd be worth a lot to see you soon—yes, very soon."



"THERE'S MANNY A DAY OF THROUBLE WILL COME BETWEEN YE AND THE END, BUT THE END 'LL BE ALL RIGHT, GOD LOVE YE!"

"Oh, you'll be forgetting me by to-morrow," the girl said with a little wistfulness at her lips, for she had a feeling they would not meet on the morrow. Suddenly she picked from the bunch of wild flowers he had given her a little sprig of heather.

"Well, if we don't meet—wear that," she said, and, laughing over her shoulder, turned and ran into the grounds of Loyland Towers.

II

WHEN Dyck entered the library of Playmore, the first words he heard were these:

"Howe has licked the French at Brest. He's smashed the French fleet and dealt a sharp blow to the revolution. Hurrah!"

The words were used by Miles Calhoun, Dyck's father, as a greeting to him on his return from the day's sport.

Now, if there was a man in Ireland who had a narrow view and kept his toes pointed to the front, it was Miles Calhoun. His people had lived in Connemara for hundreds of years; and he himself had only one passion in life, which was the Protestant passion of prejudice. He had ever been a follower of Burke—a passionate fol-

lower, one who believed the French Revolution was a crime against humanity, a danger to the future of civilization, a miserable orgy of unworthy millions.

He had resisted more vigorously than most men

the progress of revolutionary sentiments in Ireland. He was aware that his son had far less rigid opinions than himself; that he even defended Wolfe Tone and Thomas Emmet against abuse and damnation. That was why he had delight in slapping his son in the face, whenever possible, with the hot pennant of victory for British power.

He was a man of irascible temperament and stern views, given to fits of desperate exasperation. He was small of stature, with a round face, with eyes that suddenly went red



WITH A LAUGH NOT
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with feeling, and with none of the handsomeness of his son, who resembled his mother's side of the family.

The mother herself had been a beautiful and remarkable woman. Dyck was, in a sense, a reproduction of her in body and mind, for a more cheerful and impetuous person never made a household happier or more imperfect than she made hers.

Her amazing beauty and continual cheerfulness had always been the joy of Dyck's life, and because his mother had married his father—she was a woman of sense, with all her lightsome ways—he tried to regard his father with profound respect. Since his wife's death, however, Miles Calhoun had steadily deteriorated; he had become rigidly unreasonable.

As the elder Calhoun made his announcement about the battle of Brest and the English victory, a triumphant smile lighted his flushed face, and under his heavy gray brows his eyes danced with malicious joy.

"Howe's a wonder!" he said. "He'll make those savage, mad red republicans hunt their holes. Eh, isn't that your view, Ivy?" he asked of a naval captain who had evidently brought the news.

Captain Ivy nodded.

"Yes, it's a heavy blow for the French bloodsuckers. If their ideas creep through Europe and get hold of England, God only knows what the end will be! In their view, to alter everything that exists is the only way to put things right. No doubt they'll invent a new way to be born before they've finished."

"Well, that wouldn't be a bad idea," remarked Dyck. "The present way has its demerits."

"Yes, it throws responsibility upon the man, and gives a heap of trouble to the woman," remarked Captain Ivy with a laugh; "but they'll change it all, you'll see."

Dyck poured himself a glass of port, held it up, sniffed the aroma, and looked through the beautiful red tinge of the wine with a happy and critical eye.

"Well, there are lots of ways in which the world could be remade," he declared. "I shouldn't mind seeing a bit of a revolution in Ireland—but in England first," he hastened to add. "They're a more outcast folk than the Irish."

His father scoffed.

"Look out, Dyck, or they'll drop you in jail if you talk like that!" he chided, his red face growing redder, his fingers ner-

vously feeling the buttons on his picturesque silk waistcoat. "There's conspiracy in Ireland, and you never truly know if the man that serves you at your table, or brings you your horse, or puts a spade into your ground, isn't a traitor."

At that moment the door opened, and a servant entered the room. In his hand he carried a letter which, with marked excitement, he brought to Miles Calhoun.

"Sure, he's waiting, sir," he said.

"And who's he?" asked his master, turning the letter over, as though to find out by looking at the seal.

"Oh, a man of consequence, if we're to judge by the way he's clothed."

"Fit company, then, for host and guest?" his master asked, as he began to open the heavily sealed letter.

"Well, I'm not saying that, for there's no company good enough for us," answered the higgledy-piggledy butler, with a quirk of the mouth; "but, as messengers go, I never seen one with more style and point."

"Well, bring him to me," said Miles Calhoun. "Bring him to me, and I'll form my own judgment—though I have some confidence in yours."

"You could go further and fare worse, as the Papists say about purgatory," answered the old man with respectful familiarity.

Captain Ivy and Dyck grinned, but the head of the house seemed none too pleased at the freedom of the old butler.

"Bring him as he is," said Miles Calhoun, and broke the seal of the letter in his hand. "Good God!" he added, doing so, for he had just realized that the stamp of the seal was that of the attorney-general of Ireland.

Then he opened the letter and read it. A flush swept over his face, making its red almost purple.

"Eternal damnation—eternal damnation!" he declared, holding the paper at arm's length, inspecting it. He then handed it to Dyck. "Read that, lad," he said. "Then pack your bag, for we start for Dublin by daylight or before."

Dyck read the brief document and whistled softly to himself.

"Well, well, you've got to obey orders like that, I suppose," Dyck said. "They want to question us as to the state of the country here."

"I think we can tell them something. I wonder if they know how wide your travel

is, how many people you see; and if they know, how did they come to know? There's spies all over the place. How do I know but the man who's just left this room isn't a spy, isn't the enemy of all of us here?"

"I'd suspect Michael Clones," remarked Dyck, "just as soon as Mulvaney."

"Michael Clones," remarked his father, and he turned to Captain Ivy, "Michael Clones I'd trust as I'd trust his blessed Majesty, George III. He's a rare scamp, is Michael Clones! He's no thicker than a cardboard, but he draws the pain out of your hurt like a mustard plaster. A man of better sense and greater roguery I've never met. You must see him, Captain Ivy. He's only about twelve years older than my son, but, like my son, there's no holding him, there's no control of him that's any good. He does what he wants to do in his own way—talks when he wants to talk, fights when he wants to fight. He's a man of men, is Michael Clones!"

At that moment the door opened and the butler entered, followed by a tall, thin, *Don Quixote* sort of figure.

"His excellency," said Mulvaney, with a look of triumph, slightly malevolent, for the visitor had refused his name. Then he turned and left the room.

At Mulvaney's words, a dry, ironical smile crossed the face of the newcomer. Then he advanced to Miles Calhoun. Before speaking, however, he glanced sharply, yet steadfastly, at Captain Ivy, threw an inquisitive look at Dyck, and said:

"I seem to have hurt the feelings of your butler, sir, but that cannot be helped. I have come from the attorney-general. My name is Leonard Mallow—I'm the eldest son of Lord Mallow. I've been doing business in Limerick, and I bring a message from the attorney-general to ask you to attend his office at the earliest moment."

Dyck Calhoun, noting his glance at a bottle of port, poured out a glass of the good wine and handed it over, saying:

"It'll taste better to you because you've been traveling hard, but it's good wine anyhow. It's been in the cellar for forty years, and that's something in a land like this."

Mallow accepted the glass of port, raised it with a little gesture of respect, and said:

"Long life to the king, and cursed be his enemies!"

So saying he flung the wine down his throat—which seemed to gulp it like a well

—wiped his lips with a lace handkerchief, and turned to Miles Calhoun again.

"Yes, it's good wine," he said; "as good as you'd get in the cellars of the viceroy. I've seen strange things as I came. I've seen lights on the hills, and drunken rioters in the roads and behind hedges, and once a shot was fired at me; but here I am, safe and sound, carrying out my orders. What time will you start?" he added.

He took it for granted that the summons did not admit of rejection, and he was right. The document contained these words:

Trouble is brewing; indeed, it is at hand. Come, please, at once to Dublin, and give the lord lieutenant and the government a report upon your district. We do not hear altogether well of it, but we are aware that no one has the knowledge you possess. In the name of his majesty you are hereby asked to present yourself at once at these offices in Dublin, and be assured that the lord lieutenant will give you warm welcome through me. Your own loyalty gives much satisfaction here, and if you can bring useful information much good may ensue. I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,
JOHN MCNOWELL.

"You have confidence in their loyalty here?" asked Mallow.

"As great as in my own," answered Dyck cheerily.

"Well, you ought to know what that is. At the same time, I've heard you're a friend of one or two dark spirits in the land."

"I hold no friendships that would do hurt to my country," answered Dyck sharply.

Mallow smiled satirically.

"As we're starting at daylight, I suppose," he said, "I think I'll go to bed, if it may be you can put me up."

"Oh, Lord, yes! We can put you up, Mr. Mallow," remarked the old man. "You shall have as good a bed as you can find outside the Viceregal Lodge—a four-poster, very wide and very long. It's been slept in by many a man of place and power. But, Mr. Mallow, you haven't announced that you've had no dinner, and you'll not be going to bed in this house without your food. Did you shoot anything to-day, Dyck?" he asked his son.

"I didn't bring home a feather. There were no birds to-day, but there are the ducks I shot yesterday, and the quail."

"Oh, yes," said his father, "and there's the little roast pig, too. This is a day when we celebrate the anniversary of Irish power and life."

"What's that?" asked Mallow.

"That's the battle of the Boyne," answered his host with pride and a little air of ostentation.

"Oh, you're one of the Peep-o'-Day Boys, then," remarked Mallow.

"I'm not saying that," answered the old man. "I'm not an Ulsterman, but I celebrate the coming of William to the Boyne. Things were done that day that 'll be remembered when Ireland is whisked away into the Kingdom of Heaven. So you'll not go to bed till you've had dinner, Mr. Mallow! By me soul, I think I smell the little porker now. Dinner at five, to bed at eight, up before daylight, and off to Dublin when the light breaks. That's the course!" He turned to Captain Ivy. "I'm sorry, captain, but there's nothing else to do, and you were going to-morrow at noon, anyhow, so it won't make much difference to you."

"It will make no difference whatever," replied the sailorman. "I have to go to Dublin, too, and from there to Queens-town to join my ship, and from Queens-town to the coast of France to do some fighting."

"Please God!" remarked Miles Calhoun.

"So be it!" declared Mallow.

"Amen!" said Dyck.

Once again Dyck looked the visitor straight in the eyes, and far back in the dim horizon of Mallow's life-sky there shone for an instant the light of an evil star.

"There's the call to dinner," remarked Miles Calhoun, as a bell began ringing in the tower outside. "Come with me, Mr. Mallow, and I'll show you your room. You've had your horse put up, I hope?"

"Yes, and my bag brought in."

"Well, come along, then," said the old man. "There's no time to lose. I can smell the young hog crawling out of the oven."

"You're a master of tempting thoughts," remarked Mallow enthusiastically.

"Sheila—Sheila!" said Dyck Calhoun to himself where he stood.

III

THE journey to Dublin was made by the Calhouns, their two guests, and Michael Clones, without incident of note. Arrived there, Miles Calhoun gave himself to examination by government officials and to assisting the designs of the Peep-o'-Day

Boys; and indeed he was present at the formation of the first Orange Lodge.

His narrow nature, his petty craft and malevolence, were useful in a time of anxiety for the state. Yet he had not enough ability to develop his position by the chances offered him. He had not a touch of genius; he had only bursts of Celtic passion, which he had not mind enough to control.

Indeed, as days, weeks, and months went on, his position became less valuable to himself, and his financial affairs suffered from his own and his agent's bad management. In his particular district he was a power; in Dublin he soon showed the weaker side of his nature. He had a bad habit of making foes where he could easily have made friends. In his personal habits he was sober, but erratic. No meal was ever served twice at the same hour in the same week. The lodgings he rented in Dublin had few conveniences, but they might have served, had his own capacity been greater.

Dyck had not his father's abstention from the luxuries of life, however. He drank, he gamed, he went where temptation was, and fell into it. He steadily diminished his powers of resistance to self-indulgence until one day, at a tavern, he met a man who, on the instant, made a great impression upon him.

This man was brilliant, ebullient, full of humor, character, and life, knowing apparently all the lower world of Dublin, and moving with an assured step. It was Erris Boyne, the divorced husband of Mrs. Llyn and the father of Sheila Llyn; but this fact was not known to Dyck. There was also a chance of its not becoming known, because so many years had passed since Erris Boyne was divorced. People seemed to take no notice of what he did or said, save in the flash and enjoyment of the moment.

One day Erris Boyne said to Dyck:

"There's a supper to-night at the Breakneck Club. Come along and have a skinful. You'll meet people worth knowing. They're a damned fine lot of fellows for you to meet, Calhoun!"

"The Breakneck Club isn't a good name for a first-class institution," remarked Dyck, with a pause and a laugh; "but I'll come, if you'll fetch me."

Erris Boyne, who was eighteen years older than Dyck, laughed, flicked a little pinch of snuff at his nose with his finger.

"Dear lad, of course I'll come and fetch you," he said. "There's many a man has done worse than lead a gay stripling like you into pleasant ways. Bring along any loose change you have, for it may be a night of nights."

"Oh, they play cards, do they, at the Breakneck Club?" said Dyck, alive with interest.

"Well, call it what you like, but men must do something when they get together, and we can't be talking all the time," said Erris Boyne. "So pocket your shillings. It's the best place to come to ever an honest man had."

"Are they all the right sort?" asked Dyck, with a little touch of malice. "I mean, are they loyal and true and good?"

Erris Boyne laid a hand on Dyck's arm. "Come and find out," he said. "Do you think I'd lead you into bad company? Of course Emmet and Wolfe Tone won't be there, nor any of that lot; but there'll be

some men of the right stamp." He watched Dyck carefully out of the corner of his eye. "It's funny," he added, "that in Ireland the word loyal always means being true to the Union Jack, standing by King George and his crowd."

"Well, what would you have?" remarked Dyck. "For this is a day and age when being loyal to the king is more than aught else in all the Irish world. We're never two days alike, we Irish. There are the United Irishmen and the Defenders on one side, and the Peep-o'-Day Boys, or Orangemen, on the other—Catholic and Protestant, at each other's throats. Then there's a hand thrust in, and up goes the sword, and the rifles, pikes, and bayonets; and those that were ready to



"LOOK OUT, DYCK, OR THEY'LL DROP YOU IN JAIL IF YOU TALK LIKE THAT. THERE'S CONSPIRACY IN IRELAND, AND YOU NEVER TRULY KNOW IF THE MAN WHO SERVES YOUR TABLE OR BRINGS YOUR HORSE ISN'T A TRAITOR"

mutilate or kill each other fall into each other's arms."

Erris Boyne laughed.

"Well, there'll soon be an end to that. The Irish Parliament is slipping into disrepute. It wouldn't surprise me if the astute English bribe them into a union, to the ruin of Irish independence. Yet maybe, before that comes, the French will have a try for power here. And upon my word, if I have to live under a foreign rule, I'd as leave have a French whip over me as an English!" He came a step nearer, his voice lowered a little. "Have you heard the latest news from France? They're coming with a good-sized fleet down to the south coast. Have you heard it?"

"Oh, there's plenty one hears that one doesn't believe is gospel," answered Dyck, his eyes half closing. "I'm not believing all I hear, as if it was a prayer-meeting. Anything may happen here; Ireland's a woman—very uncertain."

Dyck flicked some dust from his waistcoat, and dropped his eyes, because he was thinking of two women he had known; one of them an angel now in company of her sister angels—his mother; the other a girl he had met on the hills of Connemara, a wonderfully pretty girl of seventeen. How should he know that the girl was Erris Boyne's daughter?—although there were times when some gesture of Boyne, some quick look, some lifting of the eyebrows, brought back the memory of Sheila Llyn, as it did now.

Since Dyck left his old home he had seen her twice; once at Loyland Towers, and once at her home in Limerick. The time he had spent with her had been very brief, but full of life, interest, and character. She was like some piquant child, bold, beautiful, uncertain, caressing in her manner one instant, and reserved and distant at another.

She had said radiant things, had rallied him, had shown him where a twenty-nine-pound salmon had been caught in a stream, and had fired at and brought down a pheasant outside the covert at Loyland Towers. Whether at Loyland Towers or at her mother's house in Limerick, there was no touch of forwardness in her, or in anything she said or did. She was the most natural being, the freest from affectation, he had ever known.

As Erris Boyne talked to him, the memory of Sheila flooded his mind, and on the

flood his senses swam like swans. He had not her careful composure. He was just as real, but he had the wilfulness of man. She influenced him as no woman had ever yet done; but he saw no happy ending to the dream. He was too poor to marry; he had no trade or profession; his father's affairs were in a bad way. He could not bring himself to join the army or the navy; and yet, as an Irishman moved by political ideals, with views at once critical and yet devoted to the crown, he was not in a state to settle down.

He did not know that Erris Boyne was determined to capture him for the rebel cause. How could he know that Boyne was an agent of the most evil forces in Ireland—an agent of skill and address, prepossessing, with the face of a Celtic poet and the eye of an assassin?

Boyne's object was to bring about the downfall of Dyck Calhoun—that is, his downfall as a patriot. At the Breakneck Club this bad business began. Dyck had seen many people, representing the gaiety and deviltry of life; but it was as though all the doubtful people, all the gay and reckless ones, all those with purposes, fads, and fancies, were there. Here was an irresponsible member of a government department; there an officer of his majesty's troops; beyond, a profligate bachelor whose reputation for irregular, not to say traitorous, diplomacy was known and feared. Yet everywhere were men known in the sporting, gaming, or political world, in sea life or land life, most of whom had a character untouched by criticism.

It was at this club that Dyck again met that tall, meager messenger from the attorney-general, who had brought the message to Miles Calhoun. It was with this man—Leonard Mallow, son of Lord Mallow—that Dyck, with three others, played cards one afternoon.

The instinctive antipathy which had marked their first introduction was carried on to this later meeting. Dyck distrusted Mallow, and allowed his distrust exercise. It was unfortunate, however, that Mallow at first won from him three-fourths of the money he had brought to the club, and won it with a smile not easy to forgive.

Dyck had at last secured a real success in a scheme of his cards when Mallow asked with a sneer:

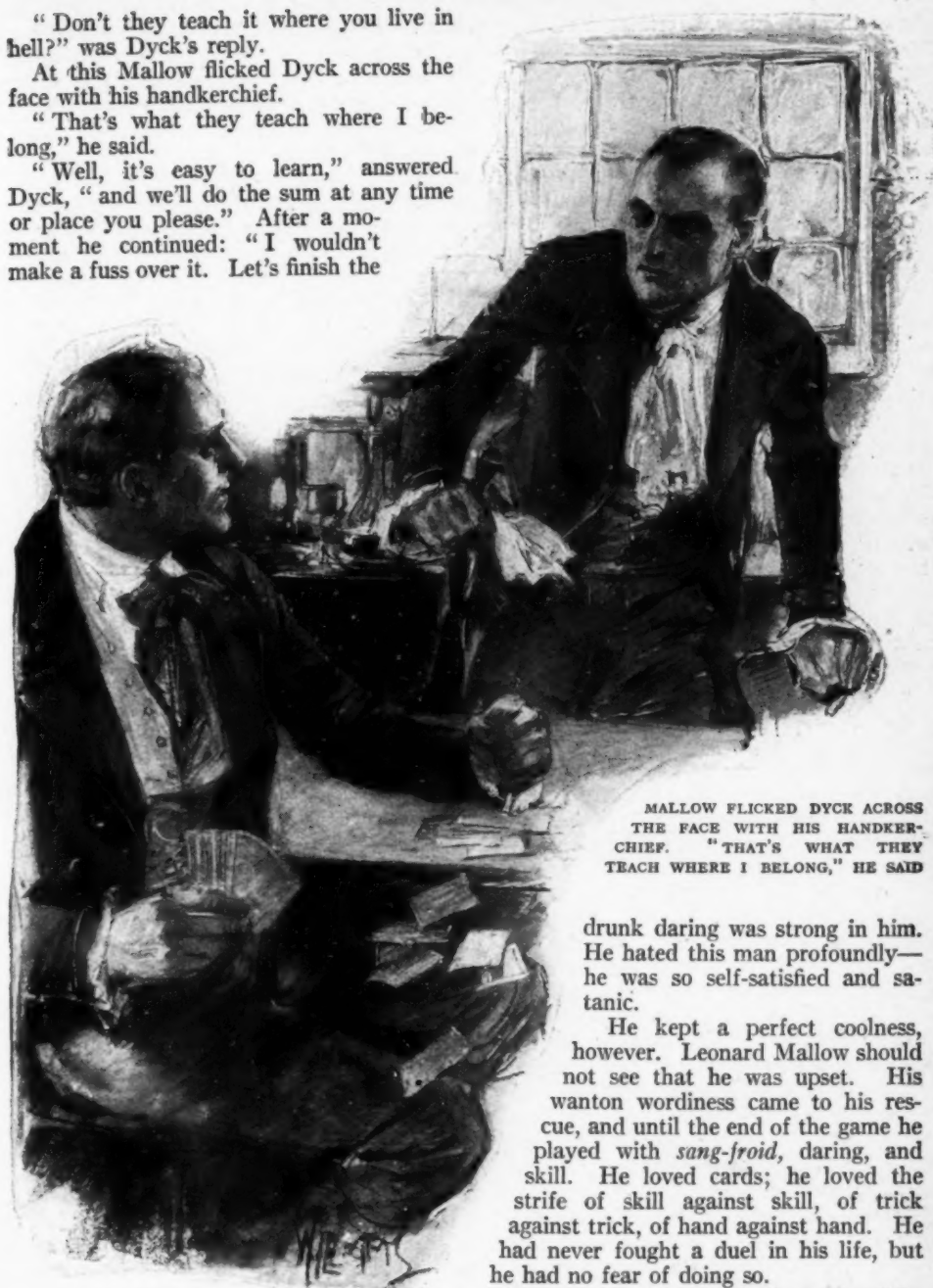
"Did you learn that at your home in heaven?"

"Don't they teach it where you live in hell?" was Dyck's reply.

At this Mallow flicked Dyck across the face with his handkerchief.

"That's what they teach where I belong," he said.

"Well, it's easy to learn," answered Dyck, "and we'll do the sum at any time or place you please." After a moment he continued: "I wouldn't make a fuss over it. Let's finish the



MALLOW FLICKED DYCK ACROSS THE FACE WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF. "THAT'S WHAT THEY TEACH WHERE I BELONG," HE SAID

drunk daring was strong in him. He hated this man profoundly—he was so self-satisfied and satanic.

He kept a perfect coolness, however. Leonard Mallow should not see that he was upset. His wanton wordiness came to his rescue, and until the end of the game he played with *sang-froid*, daring, and skill. He loved cards; he loved the strife of skill against skill, of trick against trick, of hand against hand. He had never fought a duel in his life, but he had no fear of doing so.

At length, having won back nearly all he had lost, he rose to his feet and looked round.

"Is there any one here from whom I can ask a favor?" he said.

Several stepped forward. Dyck nodded.

game. There's no good prancing till the sport's ready; so I'll sit and learn more of what they teach in hell!"

Dyck had been drinking, or he would not have spoken so; and when he was

One of them he knew. It was Sir Almeric Foyle.

"Thank you, Sir Almeric," he said; "thank you. Shall it be swords or pistols?" he asked his enemy coolly.

"Swords, if you please," remarked Mallow grimly, for he had a gift with the sword.

Dyck nodded again.

"As you will," he said. "As you will!"

IV

It was a morning such as could only be conjured into existence by the Maker of mornings in Ireland. It was a day such as Dublin placed away carefully into the pantechnicon of famous archives.

The city of Dublin was not always clean, but in the bright, gorgeous sun her natural filth was no menace to the eye, no repulse to the senses. Above the Liffey, even at so early an hour, the heat shimmers like a silver mist. The bells of churches were ringing, and the great cathedral bells boomed in thrilling monotony over the peaceful city. Here and there in the shabby yet renowned streets, horsemen moved along; here and there the costermonger raised his cry of fresh fruit, flowers, and "distinguished vegetables."

People moved into church doorways on their way to mass or confession—some bright and rather gorgeous specimens of humanity, some in deep mourning, shy, reserved, and obscure. Here and there, also, in certain official streets—where officials lived or worked—were soldiers afoot; soldiers with carbines and long bayonets, with tall, slightly peaked hats, smart red coats with epaulets, belts crossing their breasts, knee-breeches and leggings, and all with epaulets shining. They were in marked contrast to the peasant folk with the high-peaked soft hat, knee-breeches, rough tailcoat, and stockings, some with rifles, some with pikes, some with powder-horns slung under their arms or in the small of the back.

Besides this show of foot-soldiers—that is, regulars and irregulars of the Cornwallis Regiment, and men of the Defenders and the Peep-o'-Day Boys—there were little groups of cavalry making their way to the parade-ground, the castle, the barracks, or the courts.

Beyond these there was the jaunting-car trundling over the rough cobblestone street, or bumping in and out of dangerous

holes. Whips cracked, and the loud voices of jarveys shouted blatant humor and Irish fun at horse and passenger. Here and there, also, some stately coach, bedizened with the arms of the quality, made its way lumberingly through the chief streets, or across the bridges of the Liffey.

Then came the general population, moving cheerfully in the inspiring sun; for Irishmen move so much in a moist atmosphere that on a sunshiny day all the *tristesse* of life seems to be changed, as in a flash, into high spirits and much activity. Not that the country, at its worst, is slow-footed or depressed; for wit is always at the elbow of want.

Never in all Ireland's years had she a more beautiful day than that in which Dyck Calhoun and Leonard Mallow met to settle their account in a secluded corner of Phoenix Park. It was not the usual place for duels. The seconds had taken care to keep the locale from the knowledge of the public; especially as many who had come to know of the event at the Break-neck Club were eager to be present.

The affair began an hour after sunrise. Neither Dyck nor Leonard Mallow slept at home the night before, but in separate taverns near Phoenix Park. Mallow came almost jauntily to the obscure spot. Both men had sensitiveness and sympathy, and both of them entered the grounds with a certain thrill of pleasure softening the acerbity of the moment.

Dyck moved and spoke like a man charged with some fluid which had abstracted him from life's monotonous routine. He had to consider the chance of never leaving the grounds alive; yet as he entered the place, where smooth grass between the trees made good footing for the work to be done, the thrill of the greenery, the sound of the birds, the flick of a lizard across the path, and the distant gay leap of a young deer, brought to his senses a gust of joyous feeling.

"I never smelled such air!" he said to one of the seconds. "I never saw the sun so beautiful!" He sniffed the air and turned his face toward the sun. "Well, it's a day for Ireland," he added, in response to a gravely playful remark of Sir Almeric Foyle. "Ireland never was so sweet. Nature's provoking us!"

"Yes, it's a pity," said Sir Almeric. "But I'm not thinking of any bad luck for you, Calhoun."

Dyck's smile was like that of one smiling from infinite distance. He was not normal; he was submerged. He was in the great, consuming atmosphere of the bigger world, and the greater life. He even did not hate Mallow at the moment. The thing about to be done was to him a test of manhood. It was a call upon the courage of the soul, a challenge of life, strength, and will.

As Mallow entered the grounds, the thought of Sheila Llyn crossed Dyck's mind, and the mental sight of her gladdened the eyes of his soul. For one brief instant he stood lost in the mind's look; then he stepped forward, saluted, shook hands with Mallow, and doffed his coat and waistcoat.

As he did so, he was conscious of a curious coldness, even of dampness, in the hand which had shaken that of Mallow. Mallow's hand had a clammy touch—clammy, but firm and sure. There was no tremor in the long, thin fingers nor at the lips—the thin, ascetic lips, as of a secret-service man—but in his eyes was a dark fire of purpose. The morning had touched him, but not as it had thrown over Dyck its mantle of peace. Mallow also had enjoyed the smell and feeling of it all, but with this difference—it had filled him with such material joy that he could not bear the thought of leaving it. It gave him strength of will, which would add security to his arm and wrist. Yet, as he looked at Dyck, he saw that his work was cut out for him; for in all his days he had never seen so young a man who was so well-possessed, so surely in hand.

Dyck had learned swordmanship with as skilled a master as Ireland had known, and he had shown, in getting knowledge of the weapon, a natural instinct and a capacity worthy of the highest object. He had handled the sword since he was six, and his play was better than that of most men; but this was, in fact, his first real duel. In the troubled state of Ireland, with internal discord, challenge, and attack, he had more than once fought, and with success; but that was in the rough-and-tumble of life's chances, as it were, with no deliberate plan to fight according to the rules. Many times, of course, in the process of his training, he had fought as men fight in duels, but with this difference—that now he was permitted to disable or kill his foe.

It was clear that one or the other would

not leave this ground—this verdant, beautiful piece of mother earth—exactly as he entered it. He would leave it wounded, incapable, or dead. Indeed, both might leave it wounded, and the chances of success were with the older man, Mallow, whose experience would give him an advantage.

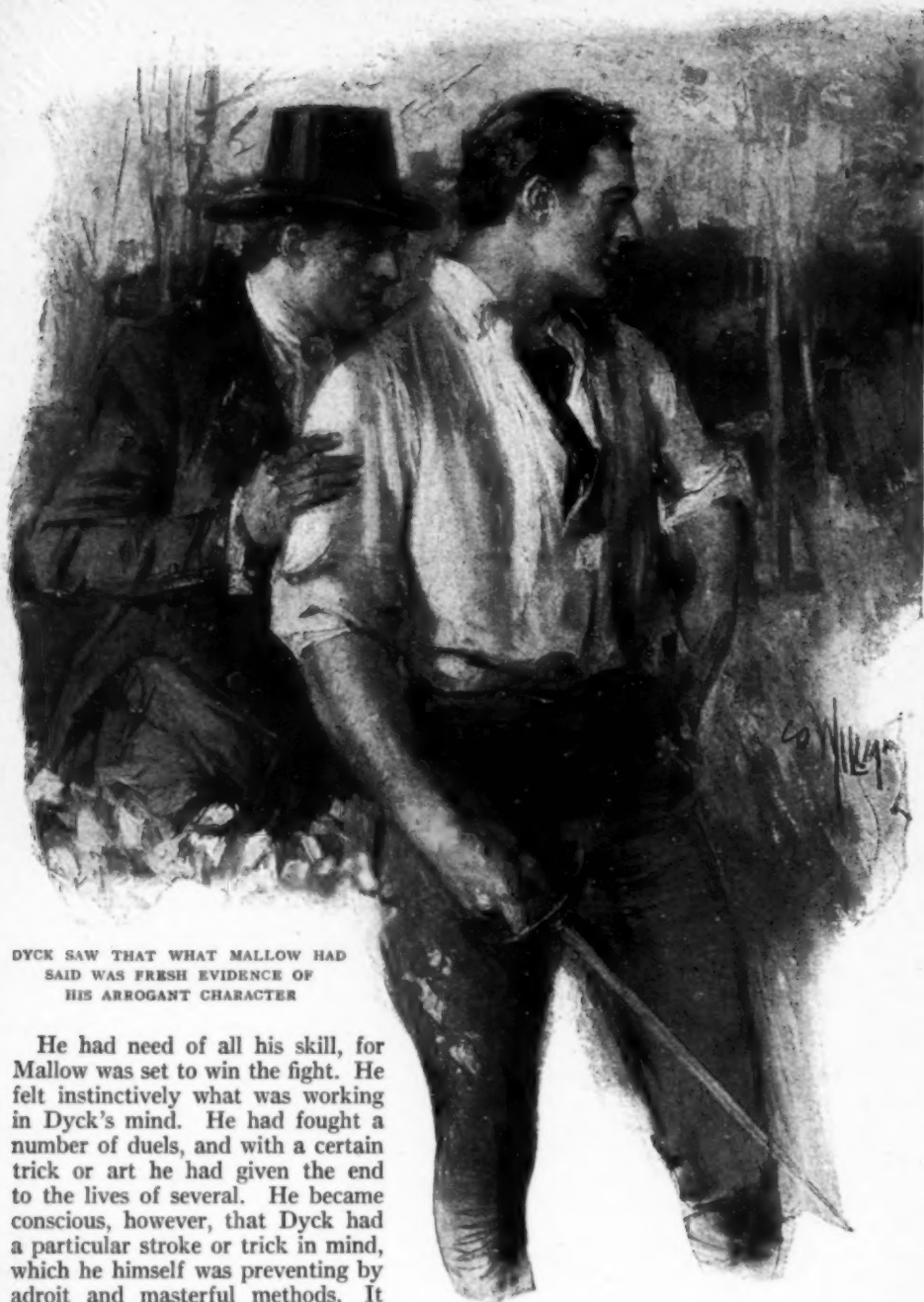
Physically, there was not a vast deal to choose between the two men. Mallow was lank and tall, nervously self-contained, finely concentrated, and vigorous. Dyck was broad of shoulder, well set up, muscular, and with a steadier eye than that of his foe. Also, as the combat developed, it was clear that he had a hand as steady as his eye. What was more, his wrist had superb strength and flexibility; it was as enduring and vital as the forefoot and ankle of a tiger. As a pair they were certainly notable, and would give a good account of themselves.

No one of temperament who observed the scene could ever forget it. The light was perfect—evenly distributed, clear enough to permit accuracy of distance in a stroke. The air was still, gently bracing, and, like most Irish air, adorably sweet.

The spot chosen for the fight was a sort of avenue between great trees, whose broad leaves warded off the direct sun, and whose shade had as yet no black shadows. The turf was as elastic to the foot as a firm mattress. In the trees, birds were singing with liveliness; in the distance, horned cattle browsed, and a pair of horses stood gazing at the combatants, startled, no doubt, by this invasion of their pasturage. From the distance came the faint, mellow booming of church-bells.

The two men fighting had almost the air of gladiators. Their coats were off, and the white linen of their shirts looked pleasing and gracious; while the upraised left hand of the fighters balancing the sword-thrust and the weight of the body had an almost singular beauty. Of the two, Dyck was the more graceful, the steadier, the quicker in his motions.

Vigilant Dyck was, but not reckless. He had made the first attack, on the ground that the aggressor gains by boldness, if that boldness is joined to skill; and Dyck's skill was of the best. His heart was warm. His momentary vision of Sheila Llyn remained with him—not as a vision, rather as a warmth in his inmost being, something which made him intensely alert, cheerful, defiant, exactly skilful.



DYCK SAW THAT WHAT MALLOW HAD
SAID WAS FRESH EVIDENCE OF
HIS ARROGANT CHARACTER

He had need of all his skill, for Mallow was set to win the fight. He felt instinctively what was working in Dyck's mind. He had fought a number of duels, and with a certain trick or art he had given the end to the lives of several. He became conscious, however, that Dyck had a particular stroke or trick in mind, which he himself was preventing by adroit and masterful methods. It might be one thing or another, but in view of Dyck's training it would perhaps be the Enniscorthy touch.

Again and again Dyck pressed his antagonist backward, seeking to muddle his

defense and to clear an opening for his own deadly stroke; but the other man also was a master, and parried successfully.

Presently, with a quick move, Mallow



"YOU'LL HAVE A
GREAT REPUTATION IN
DUBLIN TOWN NOW," MALLOW ADDED

took the offensive, and tried to unsettle Dyck's poise and disorganize his battle-plan. For an instant the tempestuous action, the brilliant, swift play of the sword, the quivering flippancy of the steel, gave Dyck that which almost disconcerted him. Yet he had a grip of himself, and was fortunate to preserve his defense intact; though once his enemy's steel caught his left shoulder, making it bleed. The seconds, however, decided that the thrust was not serious, and made no attempt to interrupt the combat.

Dyck kept singularly cool. As Mallow's face grew flushed, his own grew paler, but it was the paleness of intensity and not of fear. Each man's remarkable skill in defense was a good guarantee against disaster due to carelessness. Seldom have men fought so long and accomplished so little in the way of blood-letting.

At length, however, Dyck's tactics changed. Once again he became aggres-

sive, and with consummate ability he drove his foe to a point where the skill of both men was tried to the uttermost. It was clear the time had come for something definite. Suddenly Dyck threw himself back with an agile step, lunged slightly to one side, and then in a gallant foray got the steel point into the sword-arm of his enemy. That was the Enniscorthy stroke, which had been taught him by William Tandy, the expert swordsman, and had been made famous by Lord Welling, of Enniscorthy. It succeeded, and it gave Dyck the victory, for Mallow's sword dropped from his hand.

A fatigued smile came to Mallow's lips. He clasped the wounded arm with his left hand as the surgeon came forward.

"Well, you got it home," he said to Dyck; "and it's deftly done."

"I did my best," answered Dyck. "Give me your hand, if you will."

With a wry look Mallow, now seated on the old stump of a tree, held out his left hand. It was covered with blood.

"I think we'll have to forego that courtesy, Calhoun," he said. "Look at the state of my hand! It's good blood," he added grimly. "It's damned good blood, but—but it won't do, you see."

"I'm glad it was no worse," said Dyck, not touching the bloody hand. "It's a clean thrust, and you'll be better from it soon. These great men"—he smiled toward the surgeons—"will soon put you right. I got my chance with the stroke, and took it, because I knew that if I didn't, you'd have me presently."

"You'll have a great reputation in Dublin town now, and you'll deserve it," Mallow added adroitly, the great paleness of his features, however, made ghastly by the look of hatred in his eyes.

Dyck did not see this look, but he felt a note of repugnance and malice—a distant note—in Mallow's voice. He saw that what Mallow had said was fresh evidence of the man's arrogant character. It did not offend him, however, for he was victor, and could enter the Breakneck Club or Dublin society with a tranquil eye.

Again Mallow's voice was heard.

"I'd have seen you damned to hell, Calhoun, before I'd have apologized at the Breakneck Club; but after a fight with one of the best swordsmen in Ireland I've learned a lot, and I'll apologize now—completely."

The surgeon had bound up the slight wound in Dyck's shoulder, had stopped the bleeding, and was now helping him on with his coat. The operation had not been without pain, but this demonstration from his foe was too much for him. It drove the look of pain from his face; it brought a smile to his lips. He came a step nearer.

"I'm as obliged to you as if you'd paid for my board and lodging, Mallow," he said; "and that's saying a good deal in these days. I'll never have a bigger fight, and I've learned enough in this to help me in the future. You're a greater swordsman than your reputation. I must have provoked you beyond reason," he went on gallantly. "I think we'd better forget the whole thing."

"I'm a Loyalist," Mallow replied. "I'm a Loyalist, and if you're one, too, what reason should there be for our not being friends?"

A black cloud flooded Calhoun's face.

"If—if I'm a Loyalist, you say! Have you any doubt of it? If you have—"

"You wish your sword had gone into my heart instead of my arm, eh?" interrupted Mallow. "How easily I am misunderstood! I meant nothing by that 'if.'" He smiled, and the smile had a touch of wickedness. "I meant nothing by it—nothing at all. As we are both Loyalists, we must be friends. Good-by, Calhoun!"

Dyck's face cleared very slowly. Mallow was maddening, but the look of the face was not that of a foe.

"Well, let us be friends," Dyck answered with a frank and cordial smile. "Good-by," he added. "I'm damned sorry we had to fight at all. Good-by!"

V

"THERE'S many a government has made a mess of things in Ireland," said Erris Boyne; "but since the day of Cromwell the Accursed this is the worst. Is there a man in Ireland that believes in it, or trusts it? There are men that support it, that are served by it, that fill their pockets out of it; but by Joseph and by Mary, there's none thinks there couldn't be a better! Have a little more Marsala, Calhoun?"

With these words, Boyne filled up the long glass out of which Dyck Calhoun had been drinking—drinking too much. Shortly before Dyck had lost all his cash at the card-table. He had turned from it penniless and discomfited to see Boyne, smiling, and gay with wine, in front of him.

Boyne took him by the arm.

"Come with me," said he. "There's no luck for you at the tables to-day. Let's go where we can forget the world, where we can lift the banner of freedom and beat the drums of purpose. Come along, lad!"

Boyne had ceased to have his earlier allurements for Dyck Calhoun, but his smile was friendly, his manner was hospitable, and he was on the spot. The time was critical for Dyck—critical and dangerous. He had lost money heavily; he had even exhausted his mother's legacy.

Of late he had seen little of his father, and the little he had seen was not fortunate. They had quarreled over Dyck's wayward doings. Miles Calhoun had said some hard things to him, and Dyck had replied that he would cut out his own course, trim his own path, walk his own way. He had angered his father terribly, and Miles, in a burst of temper, had disclosed the fact that his own property was in peril. They had been estranged ever

since; but the time had come when Dyck must at least secure the credit of his father's name at his bank to find the means of living.

It was with this staring him in the face that Erris Boyne's company seemed to offer at least a recovery of his good spirits. Dissipated as Boyne's look was, he had a natural handsomeness which, with good care of himself personally, well-appointed clothes, a cheerful manner, and witty talk, made him palatable to careless-living Dublin.

This Dublin knew little of Boyne's present domestic life. It did not know that he had injured his second wife as badly as he had deceived and wronged his first—with this difference, however, that his first wife was a lady, while his second wife, Noreen, was a beautiful, quick-tempered, lovable eighteen-year-old girl, a graduate of the kitchen and dairy, when he took her to himself. He had married her in a mad moment after his first wife—Mrs. Llyn, as she was now called—had divorced him; and after the first thrill of married life was over, nothing remained with Boyne except regret that he had sold his freedom for what he might perhaps have had without marriage.

Then began a process of domestic torture which at last alienated Noreen from him, and roused in her the worst passions of human nature. She came to know of his infidelities, and they maddened her. They had no children, and in the end he had threatened her with desertion. When she had retorted in strong words, he slapped her face, and left her with an ugly smile.

The house where they lived was outside Dublin, in a secluded spot, yet not far from stores and shops. There was this to be said for Noreen—that she kept her home spotlessly clean, even with two indifferent servants. She had a gift for housewifery which, at its best, was as good as anything in the world, and far better than could be found in most parts of Ireland.

Of visitors they had few, if any, and the young wife was left alone to brood upon her wrongs. Erris Boyne had slapped her face on the morning of the day when he met Dyck Calhoun in the hour of his bad luck. He did not see the look in her face as he left the house.

Ruthless as he was, he realized that the time had come when by bold effort he might get young Calhoun wholly into his

power. He began by getting Dyck into the street. Then he took him by an indirect route to what was reputedly a tavern of consequence. There choice spirits met on occasion, and dark souls, like Boyne, planned adventures. Outwardly it was a tavern of the old class, superficially sedate, and called the Harp and Crown. None save a very few conspirators knew how great a part it played in the plan to break the government of Ireland and to ruin England's position in the land.

The entrance was by two doors—one the ordinary public entrance, the other at the side of the house, which was on a corner. This could be opened by a skeleton key owned by Erris Boyne.

He and Dyck entered, however, by the general entrance, because Boyne had forgotten his key. They passed through the bar-parlor, nodding to one or two habitués, and presently were bestowed in a room, not large, but well furnished. It was quiet and alluring on this day when the world outside seemed disconcerting. So pleasantly did the place affect Dyck's spirits that, as he sat down in the room which had often housed worse men than himself, he gave a sigh of relief.

They played cards, and Dyck won. He won five times what he had lost at the club. This made him companionable.

"It's a poor business—cards," he said at last. "It puts one up in the clouds and down in the ditch all at the same time. I tell you this, Boyne—I'm going to stop. No man ought to play cards who hasn't a fortune; and my fortune, I'm sorry to say, is only my face!" He laughed bitterly.

"And your sword—you've forgotten that, Calhoun. You've a lot of luck in your sword."

"Well, I've made no money out of it so far," Dyck retorted cynically.

"Yet you've put men with reputations out of the running," answered Boyne; "men like Mallow."

"Oh, that was a bit of luck and a few tricks I've learned. I can't start a banking-account on that."

"But you can put yourself in the way of winning what can't be bought."

"No—no English army for me, thank you—if that's what you mean."

"It isn't what I mean," was Boyne's reply. "In the English army a man's a slave. He can neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep without being under command. He

has to do a lot of dirty work without having voice in the policy. He's a child of discipline and order."

"And a damned good thing that would be for most of us!" retorted Dyck. "But I'm not one of the most."

"I know that. Try a little more of this Marsala, Calhoun. It's the best the place has got, and it's got a lot of good stuff. I've been coming to the Harp and Crown for a good many years, and I've never had a bad drink all that time. The old landlord is a genius. He doesn't put on airs. He's a good man, is old Swinton, and there's nothing good in the drink of France that you can't get here."

"Well, if that's true, how does it happen?" asked Dyck, with a little flash of interest. "Why should this little twopenny, one-horse place—I mean in size and furnishings—have such luck as to get the best there is in France? It means a lot of trouble, eh?"

"It means some trouble," answered Boyne. "But let me tell you"—he leaned over the table and laid a hand on Dyck's, which was a little nervous—"let me speak as an old friend to you, if I may. Here are the facts. For many a year, you know as well as I do, ships have been coming from France to Ireland with the very best wines and liquors, and taking back the very best wool—smuggled, of course. Well, our little landlord here is the damndest rogue of all. The customs never touch him. From the coast the stuff comes up to Dublin without a check, and, as he's a special favorite, he gets the best to be had in *la belle France*."

"Why is he such a favorite?" asked Dyck.

Erris Boyne laughed, not loudly, but suggestively.

"When a lady kisses a man on the lips, of her own free will, and puts her arm around his neck, is it done, do you think, because it's her duty to do it or die? No, it's because she likes the man; because the man is a good friend to her; because it's money in her pocket. That's the case with old Swinton. France kisses him, as it were, because"—he paused, as though debating what to say—"because France knows he'd rather be under the revolutionary government of France than under the monarchy of England."

His voice had resonance, and, as he said these words, it had insistence.

"Do you know, Calhoun, I think old Swinton is right. We suffer here because monarchy, with its cruel hand of iron, tyrannizes over us, brutalizes us."

He did not see sudden enlightenment come into the half-drunken eyes of Dyck. He only realized that Dyck was very still, and strangely, deeply interested.

"I tell you, Calhoun, we need in Ireland something of the spirit that's alive in France to-day. They've cleaned out the kings—Louis's and Marie's heads have dropped in the basket. They're sweeping the dirt out of France; they're cleaning the dark places; they're whitewashing Versailles and sawdusting the Tuileries; they're purging the aristocratic guts of France; they're starting for the world a reformation which will make it clean. Not America alone, but England, and all Europe, will become republics."

"England?" asked Dyck in a low, penetrating voice.

"Aye, England, through Ireland. Ireland will come first, then Wales, Scotland, and England. Dear lad, the great day is come—the greatest the world has ever known. France, the spirit of it, is alive. It will purge and cleanse the universe!"

The suspicious, alert look passed from Dyck's eyes, but his face had become flushed. He reached out and poured himself another glass of wine.

"What you say may be true, Boyne. It may be true, but I wouldn't put faith in it—not for one icy minute. I don't want to see here in Ireland the horrors and savagery of France. I don't want to see the guillotine up on St. Stephen's Green."

Boyne felt that he must march carefully. He was sure of his game; but there were difficulties, and he must not throw his chances away. Dyck was in a position where, with his inflammable nature, he could be captured.

"Well, I'll tell you, Calhoun. I don't know which is worse—Ireland bloody with shootings and hangings, Ulster up in the north and Cork in the south, from the Giant's Causeway to Tralee; no two sets of feet dancing alike, with the bloody hand of England stretching out over the Irish Parliament like death itself; or France ruling us. How does the English government live here? Only by bribery and purchases. It buys its way. Isn't that true?"

Dyck nodded.

"Yes, it's true in a way," he replied.

"It's so, because we're what we are. We've never been properly put in our places. The heel on our necks—that's the way to do it."

Boyne looked at the flushed, angry face. In spite of Dyck's words, he felt that his medicine was working well.

"Listen to me, Calhoun," he said softly. "You've got to do something. You're living an idle life. You're in debt. You've ruined your independent fortune at the tables. There are but two courses open to you. One is to join the British forces—to be a lieutenant, a captain, a major, a colonel, or a general, in time; to shoot and cut and hang and quarter, and rule with a heavy rod. That's one way."

"So you think I'm fit for nothing but the sword, eh?" asked Dyck with irony. "You think I've got no brains for anything except the army."

Boyne laughed.

"Have another drink, Calhoun." He poured out more wine. "Oh, no, not the army alone; there's the navy—and there's the French navy! It's the best navy in the world, the freest and the greatest, and with Bonaparte going at us, England will have enough to do—too much, I'm thinking. So there's a career in the French navy open. And listen—before you and I are two months older, the French navy will be in the harbors of Ireland, and the French army will land here." He reached out and grasped Dyck's arm. "There's no liberty or freedom under the Union Jack. What do you think of the tricolor? It's a great flag, and under it the world is going to be ruled—England, Spain, Italy, Holland, Prussia, Austria, and Russia—all of them. The time is ripe. You've got your chance. Take it on, dear lad, take it on!"

Dyck did not raise his head. He was leaning forward with both arms on the table, supporting himself firmly; his head was bowed as though with deep interest in what Boyne said. And, indeed, his interest was great—so great that all his manhood, vigor, and energy, all his citizenship, were vitally alive. Yet he did not lift his head.

"What's that you say about French ships in the harbors of Ireland?" he said in a tone that showed interest. "Of course, I know there's been a lot of talk of a French raid on Ireland, but I didn't know it was to be so soon."

"Oh, it's near enough! It's all been arranged," replied Boyne. "There'll be ships—war-ships, commanded by Hoche.

They'll have orders to land on the coast, to join the Irish patriots, to take control of the operations, and then to march on—"

He was going to say "march on Dublin," but he stopped. He was playing a daring game. If he had not been sure of his man, he would not have been so frank and fearless.

He did not, however, mislead Dyck greatly. Dyck had been drinking a good deal, but this knowledge of a French invasion, and a sense of what Boyne was trying to do, steadied his shaken emotions; held him firmly in the grip of practical common sense. He laughed, hiccuped a little, as though he was drunk, and said:

"Of course the French would like to come to Ireland; they'd like to seize it and hold it. Why, of course they would! Don't we know all that's been and gone? Aren't Irishmen in France grown rich in industry there after having lost every penny of their property here? Aren't there Irishmen there, always conniving to put England at defiance here by breaking her laws, cheating her officers, seducing her patriots? Of course; but what astounds me is that a man of your standing should believe the French are coming here now to Ireland. No, no, Boyne; I'm not taking your word for any of these things. You're a gossip; you're a damned, pertinacious, preposterous gossip, and I'll say it as often as you like."

"So it's proof you want, is it? Well, then, here it is."

Boyne drew from his pocket a small leather-bound case and took from it a letter, which he laid on the table in front of Dyck.

Dyck looked at the document, then said:

"Ah, that's what you are, eh?—a captain in the French artillery! Well, that'd be a surprise in Ireland if it were told."

"It isn't going to be told unless you tell it, Calhoun, and you're too much of a sportsman for that. Besides, why shouldn't you have one of these if you want it—if you want it!"

"What'd be the good of my wanting it? I could get a commission here in the army of George III, if I wanted it, but I don't want it; and any man that offers it to me, I'll hand it back with thanks and be damned to you!"

"Listen to me, then, Calhoun," remarked Boyne, reaching out a hand to lay it on Dyck's arm.

Dyck saw the motion, however, and carefully drew back in his chair. "I'm not an adventurer," he said; "but if I were, what would there be in it for me?"

Boyne misunderstood the look on Dyck's face. He did not grasp the meaning behind the words, and he said to him:

"Oh, a good salary—as good as that of a general, with a commission and the spoils of war! That's the thing in the French army that counts for so much—spoils of war. When they're out on a country like this, they let their officers loose—their officers and men. Did you ever hear tell of a French army being pinched for fodder, or going thirsty for drink, or losing its head for poverty or indigence?"

"No, I never did."

"Well, then, take the advice of an officer of the French army resident now in Dublin," continued Boyne, laughing, "who has the honor of being received as the friend of Mr. Dyck Calhoun, of Playmore! Take your hand in the game that's going on! For a man as young as you, with brains and ambition, there's no height he mightn't reach in this country. Think of it—Ireland free from English control; Ireland, with all her dreams, living her own life, fearless, independent, as it was in days of yore. Why what's to prevent you, Dyck Calhoun, from being president of the Irish Republic? You have brains, looks, skill, and a wonderful tongue. None but a young man could take on the job, for it will require boldness, skill, and the recklessness of perfect courage. Isn't it good enough for you?"

"What's the way to do it?" asked Dyck, still holding on to his old self grimly.

"How is it to be done?" He spoke a little thickly, for, in spite of himself, the wine was clogging his senses. It had been artistically drugged by Boyne.

"Listen to me, Calhoun," continued Boyne. "I've known you now some time. We've come in and gone out together. We've had pleasure from the troubles of others, and have surmounted our own; but this day was inevitable. You were bound to come to it one way or another. Man, you have a heart of iron; you have the courage of Cæsar or Alexander; you have the chance of doing what no Englishman could ever do—Cromwell, or any other. Well, then, don't you see the fateful moment has come in Irish life and history?"



Strife everywhere! Alone, what can we do? Alone, if we try to shake off the yoke that binds us we shall be shattered, and our last end will be worse than our first. But with French ships, French officers and

soldiers, French guns and ammunition, with the trained men of the French army to take control here, what amelioration of our weakness, what confidence and skill on our side! Can you doubt what the end will be? Answer me, man, don't you

in the eyes. His own were bloodshot and dissipated, but there was a look in them of which Boyne might well take heed.



AT FIRST HE
DID NOT HEAR
HER. THEN, WHEN
HE DID TURN, IT WAS
TOO LATE. THE KNIFE
SHE CARRIED UNDER
HER SKIRT FLASHED OUT

see it all? Isn't it clear to you? Doesn't such a cause enlist you?"

With a sudden burst of primitive anger, Dyck got to his feet, staggering a little, but sane and grasping the fatal meaning of the whole thing. He looked Erris Boyne

Boyne had not counted on Dyck's refusal; or, if it had occurred to him, the remedy, an ancient one, was ready to his fingers. The wine was drugged. He had watched the decline of Dyck's fortunes with an eye of appreciation; he had cheerfully seen the clouds of poverty and anxiety closing in. He had known of old Miles Calhoun's financial difficulties. He had

observed Dyck's wayside loitering with revolutionists, and he had taken it with too much seriousness. He knew the condition of Dyck's purse.

He was not prepared for Dyck's indignant outburst.

"I tell you this, Erris Boyne, there's none has ever tried me as you have done! What do you think I am—a thing of the dirty street-corner, something to be swept up and cast into the furnace of treason? Look you, after to-day you and I will never break bread or drink wine together. No—by Heaven, no! I don't know whether you've told me the truth or not, but I think you have. There's this to say—I shall go from this place to Dublin Castle, and shall tell them there—without mentioning your name—what you've told about the French raid. Now, look you, by God, you're a traitor! You oughtn't to live, and if you'll send your seconds to me I'll try and do with you as I did with Leonard Mallow. Only mark me, Erris Boyne, I'll put my sword into your heart. You understand—into your filthy heart!"

At that moment the door of the room opened, and a face looked in for an instant—the face of old Swinton, the landlord of the Harp and Crown. Suddenly Boyne's look changed. He burst into a laugh, and brought his fists down on the table between them with a bang.

"By Joseph and by Mary, but you're a patriot, Calhoun!" he said. "I was trying to test you. I was searching to find the innermost soul of you. The French fleet, my commission in the French army, and my story about the landlord are all bosh. If I meant what I told you, do you think I'd have been so mad as to tell you so much, damn it? Have you no sense, man? I wanted to find out exactly how you stood—faithful or unfaithful to the crown—and I've found out. Sit down, sit down, Calhoun, dear lad. Take your hand off your sword. Remember, these are terrible days. Everything I said about Ireland is true. What I said about France is false. Sit down, man, and if you're going to join the king's army—as I hope and trust you will—then here's something to help you face the time between." He threw on the table a packet of notes. "They're good and healthy, and will buy you what you need. There's not much. There's only a hundred pounds, but I give it to you with all my heart, and you can pay it back when the

king's money comes, to you, or when you marry a rich woman."

He said it all with a smile on his face. It was done so cleverly, with so much simulated sincerity, that Dyck, in his state of semi-drunkenness, could not, at the instant, place him in his true light. Besides, there was something handsome and virile in Boyne's face—and untrue; but the untruth Dyck did not at the moment see.

Never in his life had Boyne performed such prodigies of dissimulation. He was suddenly like a schoolboy disclosing the deeds of some adventurous knight. He realized to the full the dangers he had run in disclosing the truth; for it was the truth that he had told.

So serious was the situation, to his mind, that one thing seemed inevitable. Dyck must be kidnaped at once and carried out of Ireland. It would be simple. A little more drugged wine, and he would be asleep and powerless—it had already tugged at him. With the help of his confrères in the tavern, Dyck could be carried out, put on a lugger, and sent away to France.

There was nothing else to do. Boyne had said truly that the French fleet meant to come soon. Dyck must not be able to give the thing away before it happened. The chief thing now was to prime him with the drugged wine till he lost consciousness, and then carry him away to the land of the guillotine. Dyck's tempestuous nature, the poetry and imagination of him, would quickly respond to French culture, to the new orders of the new day in France. Meanwhile, he must be soaked in drugged drink.

Already the wine had played havoc with him; already stupefaction was coming over his senses. With a good-natured, ribald laugh, Boyne poured out another glass of Marsala and pushed it gently over to Dyck's fingers.

"My gin to your Marsala," he said, and he raised his own glass of gin, looking playfully over the top to Dyck.

With a sudden loosening of all the fibers of his nature, Dyck raised the glass of Marsala to his lips and drained it off almost at a gulp.

"You're a prodigious liar, Boyne," he said. "I didn't think any one could lie so completely."

"I'll teach you how, Calhoun. It's not hard. I'll teach you how."

He passed a long cigar over the table to

Dyck, who, however, did not light it, but held it in his fingers. Boyne struck a light and held it out across the small table. Dyck leaned forward, but, as he did so, the wine took possession of his senses. His head fell forward in sleep, and the cigar dropped from his fingers.

"Ah, well—ah, well, we must do some business now!" remarked Boyne. He leaned over Dyck for a moment. "Yes, sound asleep," he said, and laughed scornfully to himself. "Well, when it's dark we must get him away. He'll sleep for at least seven or eight hours, and by that time he'll be out on the way to France, and the rest is easy."

He was about to go to the door that led into the business part of the house, when the door leading into the street opened softly, and a woman stepped inside. She

had used the key which Boyne had forgotten at his house.

At first he did not hear her. Then, when he did turn round, it was too late. The knife she carried under her skirt flashed out and into Boyne's heart. He collapsed on the floor without a sound, save only a deep sigh.

Stooping over, Noreen drew the knife out with a little gurgling cry—a smothered exclamation. Then she opened the door again—the side-door leading into the street—closed it softly, and was gone.

An hour afterward the landlord opened the door. Erris Boyne lay in his silence, stark and still. At the table, with his head sunk in his arms, sat Dyck Calhoun, snoring stertorously.

With a cry the old man knelt on the floor beside the body of Erris Boyne.

(To be continued in the March number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

MASKED HEARTS

THE people in the market,
The people in the square,
They try to hide their hearts with masks,
But I can see them bare!

On every laughing shop-girl,
On every laughing youth,
I lift a corner of a mask
To peer upon the truth.

A lover, in his anguish
Of memories that sear,
Covers the ghosts within his heart
Behind a mask of cheer.

Or there a married woman,
Who hungers to be free,
Conceals her cheated heart behind
A mask of gaiety.

Perhaps a broken father,
Gnawed by his son's disgrace,
Adjusts a mask of unconcern
To cover every trace.

Or there a haughty maiden,
Hiding a stifled love,
Although her inmost heart is rent,
Laughs, as she fits a glove.

And so they laugh and saunter,
The people in the square;
Little they know behind their masks
That I can see them bare!

Louis Ginsberg



THE CITY

I went forth to sing the city, to-day's city—

The blank stone sphinx, the monster search-light-eyed,
The roaring mill where gods grind without pity,
The falling torrent, the many-colored tide.

Granite and steel upflung became my fountains,
Cunningly reared and held as by a spell.
Lost in colossal stone, my newer mountains,
I wandered witlessly through miracle.

And snared in tiny toils both frail and idle
I lost my wonder as I had lost my stars,
Though here a mammoth heaved no man might bridle,
A terrible symphony rolled through crashing bars.

But small and obvious life fogged every wonder
And itching needs and each small thirst and lust.
Over me and about me roared the thunder
Of the city's heart; I trafficked with its dust.

Yet beyond Babylon its ways were regal;
Even Jerusalem its dreams outsoared.
Loins of the lion and splendor of the eagle,
Where swarming vermin hailed it god and lord;

Where hardly one could touch, save to defile it,
The dream fantasm it spread aloft at night;
Where men snared men, and made all men revile it,
Save in its moments of bewildering light.

Yet men had thought and raised and poised its splendor,
And fed the torrents of its living veins,
And had fallen prone before it in surrender,
Seeing its awful being repay their pains.

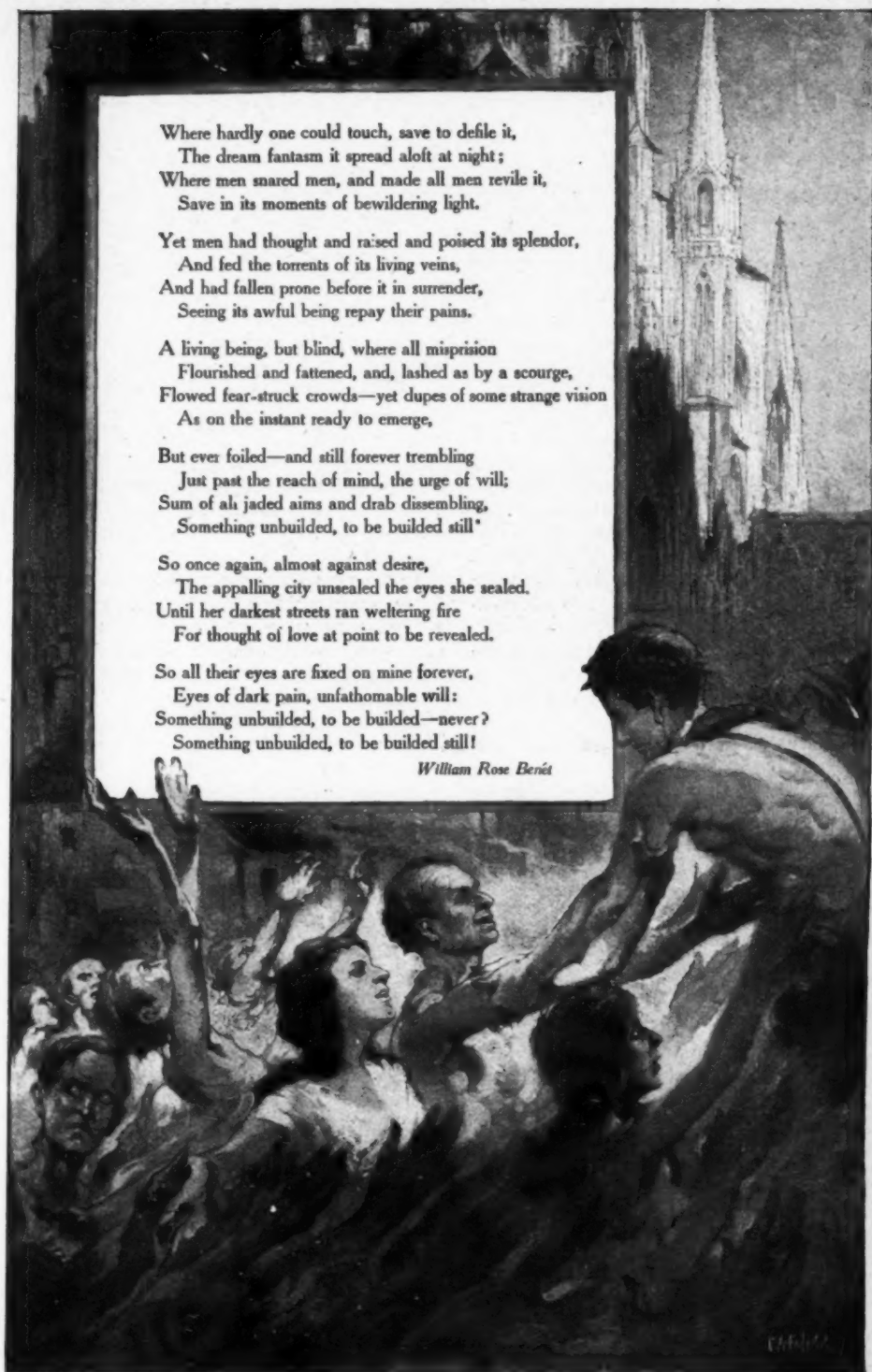
A living being, but blind, where all misprision
Flourished and fattened, and, lashed as by a scourge,
Flowed fear-struck crowds—yet dupes of some strange vision
As on the instant ready to emerge,

But ever foiled—and still forever trembling
Just past the reach of mind, the urge of will;
Sum of all jaded aims and drab dissembling,
Something unbuilt, to be built still*

So once again, almost against desire,
The appalling city unsealed the eyes she sealed.
Until her darkest streets ran weltering fire
For thought of love at point to be revealed.

So all their eyes are fixed on mine forever,
Eyes of dark pain, unfathomable will:
Something unbuilt, to be built—never?
Something unbuilt, to be built still!

William Rose Benét



The Peril of Impetuous Radicalism

THE ORDERLY PROGRESS OF THE WORLD IS ENDANGERED BY THE WIDE-SPREAD
DISTRUST OF POPULAR GOVERNMENT AND BY THE TENDENCY TOWARD
DISASTROUS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EXPERIMENTS

By Frederick M. Davenport

Professor of Law and Politics in Hamilton College, and Member of the New York State Senate

THE peril to free governments has historically arisen from arrogant autocracies on the one hand, and from mob rule on the other. Having disposed in recent time of the latest gigantic and arrogant autocracy, free governments are suddenly, without respite, confronted with a world outburst of mass instinct and emotion, which has attained great volume in Europe and some headway in the United States.

Accompaniments of this profound stirring of the mass consciousness are disorder, disorganization, an ominous decrease in industrial productivity, and attempts at substitution of direct industrial action for the familiar processes of political evolution. A distrust of the moral vitality of representative institutions of government is astonishingly evident both in Europe and America, and the wide-spread lack of confidence in men of industrial and political initiative and genius is discomfiting to the well-wishers of democracy; for democracy cannot conceivably last without a generous recognition, in industry and government, of the leadership of wisdom and power and character.

Concrete evidence of impetuous radicalism increases on every hand. It is found in the Bolshevik aftermath of Czarist reaction in Russia. There it is bald, crass, eagerly hostile to men of management and initiative and expertness in financial and industrial organization. Men of management, what are they? Fit only to black the boots of the proletariat, say the impetuous radicals, entirely oblivious of the

fact that, without the ideas and initiative of the men of management and expert organizing power, there would be no boots to black.

In the production of wealth for the mass of mankind, it is the idea above all else which is valuable. Carnegie was a telegraph-operator during the Civil War; but he had an idea. He piled wood on the ground in the Alleghany Mountains, then coal, then more wood, more coal, and finally some iron ore. In a few years the skies were red by night with the flame of furnace-fires in that valley. Once steel rails cost one hundred and twenty-four dollars a ton. Under the pressure of ideas like Carnegie's, rails have sold as low as seventeen dollars a ton, and the railway industry for the distribution of commodities and products, necessities and comforts for the mass of mankind, has spread throughout the earth.

The Singer idea of putting the eye in the point of the needle instead of in the butt, made possible the sewing-machine and the saving of the toil of the fingers of women throughout the world. Vanderbilt found fragments of a transportation system—a road to Poughkeepsie, one from there to Albany, another from Albany to Schenectady, and so on across the State of New York; with a dozen different presidents and boards of directors and overhead costs; depositing people on the ground at a dozen different terminals on the way to the journey's end. It was the Vanderbilt idea of organizing continuous transportation which has enormously reduced the expense of

travel and the hauling of freight in every part of the United States.

It was the constructive ideas of Harri-man which made him the greatest railway man the world has ever produced. Rockefeller fathomed the secrets of oil which had lain buried in the earth for millions of years. He spent a fortune in eliminating sulfur from the product of the Lima fields. He introduced tank-cars instead of barrels. The potentiality of Rockefeller's ideas of management and invention has made possible enormous economies and the wide distribution and use of kerosene and gasoline and similar products, for the utility and comfort and happiness of the mass of mankind.

It is the idea that is valuable; and pity it is that this truth should ever have been clouded by tactical blunders of policy on the part of great business organizations. It is a truth which never needed stronger emphasis than it does to-day. It is the idea of the farm-tractor which is revolutionizing agricultural production. It is the idea which has utilized waste products; which has added ingredients to the ore in the melting, and then has taken the refuse from the steel-mills and ground it into millions of barrels of cement. It is the idea of Edison which has made it possible to transfer the human voice to the disk of hard rubber and reproduce it again in perfection even after the flight of years.

The chief peril of impetuous radicalism, whether in Russia or in America, is its tendency to submerge and destroy men of ideas, of management, of initiative, of industrial wisdom and organizing power. It is the same dangerous tendency which appeared in the Spanish Inquisition and the French Reign of Terror. It is of the sort that would plunge progressive areas of the world back into the dark ages of ignorance and poverty, and defeat the purposes and hopes of the mass of mankind.

THE WORLD'S URGENT NEED TO-DAY

For the better part of five long, bitter years many millions of men have failed to perform their normal function as producers of wealth, and have given themselves to the destructive processes of war. The world will not return to a state of equilibrium, the distressing high-cost régime will run its course, until the vast need of necessities and comforts for the human race is reasonably met.

In the face of such a crisis, order, organization, the employment of all the industrial genius and leadership which the world possesses, the cooperation of millions of hands and brains in increased production, seem to be beyond cavil the most certain remedy; but in Europe, where the necessity is greatest, this single certain remedy seems not to be heeded. Rather do the Continent, and England also, appear to be seething with socialist ferment and headed toward decreasing productivity and direct action, instead of orderly political process.

In Russia two-thirds of the railways and three-quarters of the rolling-stock, we are told on high authority, are in a condition unfit for operation. From Herbert Hoover we learn that the people in that vast empire are dying by thousands of mere starvation. Instead of the normal annual output of six hundred millions of tons of coal in Europe, the Continent can probably depend upon only four hundred and fifty millions.

The brutal and murderous idealists of the Lenine government themselves appear to shrink from the further socialization of the land, and are reported to be calling back to the factories the skilled workers and experts of industry. In England the symptoms of disintegration rose toward the maximum in the strike upon the great railway utility. These and similar phenomena seem to mean that labor in England cannot wait for political action. It seems to mean that labor feels that it must have direct action and dominance in government, or over government, and that right early.

It is no answer in the public interest to say that the pendulum is swinging to the opposite limit of the arc after a long period of capitalist domination of the governments of the freer nations. The world is still deplorably unsafe for democracy while either capital or labor is in the saddle of political control.

Many groups of working people seem to forget that direct action, the general strike, while temporarily paralyzing and appalling, has its inevitable and equally lamentable reaction. It is still left to great groups of citizens who are not wage-workers to strike in retaliation; as in the recent halcyon days of the Munich and Nuremberg soviets. In Munich, we are told, physicians unitedly refused to visit the homes of striking workmen whose children were at the point of death, midwives unitedly declined to at-

tend to the delivery of babes, druggists refused to sell medicines to direct-actioners, officials in charge of food-supplies locked up the warehouses and stores and put them under military guard. In Nuremberg there appeared flaming appeals in the press to physicians, teachers, officials, druggists, peasants, and prudent workmen to hold together and prepare for their own retaliatory general strike.

There is no solution of the problems of democracy in direct action. That plan is the way of deadlock and despair. It may for a time intimidate governments. It cannot long intimidate society.

THE TENDENCY TO KOTOW TO LABOR

In America, as elsewhere in the world, the so-called capital and labor issue has become the core of politics. The pendulum is swinging from a period of more or less successful capitalistic control of government, during the forty years following the Civil War, toward a tendency of government to kowtow to labor in the present epoch.

The Adamson Law of the summer of 1916 ushered in the new epoch. It is the function of government to hold the scales of justice evenly between capital and labor, and to dominate them both. The Adamson Law marked the beginning of the tendency at Washington to employ legislation arbitrarily in the interest of labor. It fixed the eight-hour day for railroad employees and provided for investigation afterward—one of the most remarkable cases of the cart before the horse in the annals of legislation. The recollection of it has troubled the conscience of the American people. It savored far too much of a new form of governmental submission to class dictation.

The police strike in Boston followed a similarly disquieting trend. The police are the compelling arm of the elected officials of a free people. When they strike, or refuse to obey orders, they are guilty of desertion or mutiny. They represent the might of the common interest. When they become sympathetically affiliated with a class interest, when they openly or subconsciously support the side of either capital or labor, they have lost their purpose and their power as an impartial instrument of democracy.

The recent longshoremen's strike in New York was as disconcerting as the police

strike to those who believe in the essential integrity of average manhood in America. At the bottom of the harbor workers' controversy with their employers and the government lay a false and dangerous attitude toward the importance and sanctity of contract in a free civilization. The strikers would not listen to the pleading of their leaders that they should keep their word. Unless men are willing to make agreements with one another and keep them, there is an end not only to human prosperity, but to human welfare and human character. Getting what men think they need by force, rather than by honorable cooperation, is at the bottom Prussian, and deserves the Prussian fate.

WIDE-SPREAD DISTRUST OF GOVERNMENT

In America impetuous radicalism seems to go hand in hand with wide-spread lack of confidence in government. Certain provisions of the Plumb plan for the administration of the railways of the nation reveal this distrust, besides revealing the tendency to substitute the authority of a class for the authority of government. Under the Plumb plan, except that the government purchases the roads, it has very little dominating supervision over them. The last word with respect to profits and wages appears to be with labor, and with those operating officials whose self-interest under the proposed act, might comfortably lean in the same direction as that of labor.

The radicalism of the great Non-Partisan League of property-owning farmers in the Northwest, and the reason for it, and the remedy, are worthy of investigation by the statesmen of the American people. North Dakota has succumbed by popular majority to measures of pure socialism, at least some of which, like the government ownership and operation of an authoritative portion of the press, are as fatal to human progress, and as tyrannous in their possibilities, as any measures of blind reaction ever could be. Minnesota, which has been from its inception a commonwealth of careful and constructive progress, is probably impetuously radical to-day by a considerable majority; and the virus is spreading toward the Pacific. I am not now entering into the causes of this change of political nature in a great property-owning and hitherto stable democratic section of America, which are greatly worth inquiring into. I am only pointing out that

the movement follows the present dominant trend of the world toward a distrust in representative institutions, and toward a trial plunge into new, hazardous, and complicated measures of socialism.

The danger in America is of the electorate's being finally led to choose impetuous radicalism rather than constructive progress. There seems not to be the slightest possibility of the electorate of America choosing reaction. There is no likelihood of a return to the old days of ownership on a wide scale of political machines and of officers of government by powerful capitalistic groups. Some of the smaller men of financial and economic prominence in America are still committed to such a view, but the wiser and bigger men in industry have far clearer vision. The wiser men know that successful industry cannot survive, under the conditions of modern politics, unless the good of the whole people is the dominant note.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE

The good of the whole people demands that so much of profit should go to capital as to make the investment in industry attractive and to allow industry constantly to expand and progress. The good of the whole people demands that the remainder of the net product of industry should go to labor, it being understood that management is to be generously taken care of. The good of the whole people demands that with respect to wages and hours and conditions of toil, labor should be represented in the councils of industry by those who are competent to speak for labor. Wages and hours and conditions of toil vitally concern labor, and industry cannot proceed with assurance in these matters without a knowledge of the mind of labor.

But it is not in the public interest that the mass mind of labor in industry should run the business, no more than it is in the public interest that the mass mind of labor should dominate politics. What both industry and politics need most in America is the ability and genius and initiative and organizing power of exceptional and reasonably unselfish men. Without them prosperity wanes and government becomes feeble and poverty-stricken in efficiency and character.

The public interest demands increased productivity of necessities and comforts for mankind. It demands the protection of

property right, and the extension of property possession in the widest degree to the great body of industrial workers. It demands an increased confidence in orderly and popular representative government, and the most determined constructive effort to make government orderly and popular where it is not.

It is no time for sentimentalism. It is a time for thought and for cool-headed action on the part of the leaders of capital, of labor, and of politics. It is a time to assimilate the vital lessons of the war.

The experience of the war has disclosed two human groups, whom the free nations must put under foot—the merely selfish men of power and cunning at the top, and the anarchistic communists at the bottom. And there are also, the war teaches, two human groups whom the free nations must at all costs protect and conserve—on the one hand the exceptional men of organization and management and initiative and of a reasonable altruism; and on the other hand the great body of plain producers and workers, who make up the bone and sinew of the nation in time of peace or war.

The experience of the war has disclosed to the American people the political and economic degradation which follow the class rule of the industrial soviet. The American people are prepared to make short shrift of this sort of illegitimate and anarchistic democracy. The American people are committed by tradition, and now by a fiery world experience of trial, to a genuine democratic republicanism in American industry and politics; and the first article of the American industrial and political creed is the assertion of a belief in the leadership of the natural aristocracy of ability and character.

The American people will go far—nobody knows how far—to establish a sound *objective* equality in the country. They will do all they can to insure equality of opportunity for those who dwell on American soil; but they will never forget the inestimable value of exceptional men. They will never forget that except for Joffre and Foch the sun of a free civilization would have gone down in disaster. They will never accept the unsound dogma of *subjective* equality, that every man is by nature of the same mold and force as every other man—a dogma which is at the heart of the peril of the impetuous radicalism of our time.

Honorable Intentions

BY ROBERT SHANNON

Illustrated by Anton Otto Fischer



The professional hypnotist and magician acknowledged the tribute with a slight inclination of his head. The approval of the public, one or a thousand, was his meat and drink.

"I am very glad," he replied with dignity, "although it is my purpose to instruct rather than to amuse."

"That's what I mean," the little man hastened to assure him. "I learned a lot



MY ADVANCE-AGENT'S WORK," BERNARDO REMARKED. "IT SEEMS I AM TO PLAY YOUR CITY LATER ON"

HAVING finished his night performance at the opera-house, Bernardo the Great returned to the National Hotel and dropped into a lobby chair to finish a black cigar before retiring. Somehow—it seldom happened to him—he felt almost weary. His lids closed over his dark, magnetic eyes, and a discussion of trade conditions, volubly carried on by a group of traveling salesmen, became a faint babble in his ears.

The sound of a chair scraping on the floor as it was drawn close to his, followed by a slight, forced cough, aroused him. A small, wistful-faced man smiled at him affably but timidly.

"I attended your show to-night," the stranger ventured. "I was very much entertained—very much."

from you to-night. I didn't know it was possible for one man to control people like you did. I never took much stock in this hypnotism business before. Why, you had a half-dozen people up there on the stage actin' up like crazy people—dancin' around and cavortin'!"

Bernardo smiled with that superior benignity of his which gave him such an air of wisdom.

"Merely the power of mental suggestion," he remarked easily; "the virile, well-disciplined will exercising complete dominance over the individual of untrained mentality."

"But you actually put 'em to sleep," his admirer insisted, still mystified. "Why, you seemed to twist 'em around your finger, like they was putty. Then you did that there trick with mental concentration—"

"Thought transference," Bernardo corrected. "In referring to any phenomena I always use the exact technical phrase."

"Well, whatever you call it, I never seen the beat of it. Tellin' people what message they wrote down on a piece of paper that you never seen and they sealed in an envelope—well, it confounds me all right! I never knew such things was. Another thing—you made a mighty fine speech there at the last on the higher life. By golly, you looked like a Congressman and you talked like one, too—better 'n some we've had here at election times."

The heart of the mountebank warmed. Faker and trickster that he was, Bernardo the Great had his softer side. To pose pompously, to achieve effects through chicanery and sophistry, to pit his wits against the world—that was his life, and his reward was in whatever applause and homage came his way. Rather the life of the strolling player, with its limitations and privations, its uncertainties and vicissitudes, than the more substantial but prosaic fruits of his undoubted intelligence—that was Bernardo the Great. The night trips on the inland railroads, the gaping and astonished country audiences, the fare of third-class hotels, the endless chain of small-town experiences—better that, a thousand times, than respectability and stagnation. To stride down West Maple Street of Tonganoxie in a wide-brimmed hat and a long-tailed coat after a successful performance, and to feel the unsophisticated residents sizing him up in awe and respect, was worth more to him than money in the bank.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Bernardo," the man beside him summed up, "you're a man of great power and influence. In fact, I was wonderin' if I mightn't get a chance to have a personal talk with you."

"I'm always glad to talk with any one who is interested in my profession."

"But this is strictly personal. It's about a very private matter. The fact is, it's

about a lady. To-night I got the idea that you are able to make women see things in their true light."

Bernardo glanced at the speaker with new interest. As a chance observer, he would scarcely have suspected the almost wizened gentleman, who was plainly nearing his fifties, of anything remotely connected with romance; yet there was something in the man's manner that now suggested it to the keen showman.

"I suppose I may speak to you in confidence?"

"Certainly," said Bernardo, checking a smile.

"Well, sir"—it was with the air of a confession—"I might as well take a chance and come right out plain with it. I ain't no hand with women—never was; but I was figurin' on settlin' down and gettin' married, and I wanted to talk with you about it."

"Why not speak to the girl's father about it?" Bernardo suggested.

"No use. He's seventy-five years old and stone deaf."

"Well, then, how about the young lady herself?"

"That's where I'm weak. Like I said, I ain't no hand with the women."

"Been courtin' her long?"

"No, not so very."

"Just about how long?"

"Some ten years, I guess."

The lover was helplessly sincere. Bernardo cleared his throat impressively.

"Now are you sure," he asked; "are you absolutely sure this is no passing fancy with you?"

Vigorous negation was expressed in the shake of the head.

"No, sir. I'm not what you would call a flirtin' man."

"Then your intentions are—"

"Honorable, sir—honorable!"

Bernardo considered the problem in silence for several minutes.

"All right, my friend," he said finally.

"As a humanitarian, an adept in the mental sciences, and, I trust, something of a teacher and helper to my fellow man, I shall listen."

He passed a hand over his brow in thoughtful patience.

II

A CAUTIOUS glance about the lobby of the hotel showed that it was empty by now,

save for the somnolent clerk nodding behind the desk.

"I will just ask you one question," Bernardo said solemnly. "Have you ever asked this lady to marry you?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what did she say?"

"I'll never forget her words, Mr. Bernardo." There was great tenderness in the voice. "She said, 'Certainly not.'"

"When was this, please?"

"The first day I met her, just about ten years ago."

"You never proposed after that?"

There was an apologetic smile on the unsophisticated face.

"Well, how could I—after that?"

"Proceed," said Bernardo.

"The whole idea come like a flash to me to-night, when I saw you controllin' people up on the stage. I just thought that if I could do that, or if I could get you to help me—well, sir, I'd like to engage your services for about a week."

A frown momentarily darkened Bernardo's forehead.

"I don't want to insult you, sir," the seeker hastened to explain. "I realize it ain't particularly in your line, yet I felt that you would be able to bring this thing to a happy conclusion for me. I'm a reliable man and a business man, and I'm willin' to make it well worth your while. I'd almost say you could name your own figure. If I could engage you for a week we'd go to Paris—"

"Paris!"

"Paris, Missouri. It's only fifty miles up the line. You could go up there with me, and I believe you could sway her into it. That's all she needs—just somebody to sway her. Now, that's the proposition, and I want you to quote me a figure on the job."

Bernardo smiled.

"Such a service, even supposing that I could perform it, couldn't well be valued in money, could it?"

"Well, I'm willing to pay—"

Bernardo raised a hand against commercialism.

"It isn't a question of money. It's a matter of ethics. I'd have to know all the circumstances before I could consider using any occult or supernatural power."

He was interrupted.

"I'm going to tell you the whole story in a nutshell," said the little man. "My

name is Henry R. Guilfoil, and I'm the sole proprietor, inventor, manufacturer, jobber, and retailer of Guilfoil's Neverfail Sheep-Dip. Got my own little factory up there at Paris, where I live. Just happened to be here to-day on business. Before I went in the sheep-dip business I was a veterinary—you know, some people call it horse-doctor. I tell you, Mr. Bernardo, I've dealt with animals 'most all my life. Maybe that's why I don't know how to handle people—specially women. Paris is an old-time town, and the people there are sort of stiff-necked. I don't know for sure that they looked down on me for being a horse-doctor, but somehow I always thought maybe they did.

"When I first met Ariminta Nicholson, she was twenty-five years old and as pretty as a picture—to me, although there was some people couldn't see it. We met at a strawberry festival, and I proposed the same night and got the mitten. That's about all there is to it."

For a time both men sat silently. Bernardo was first to speak.

"You still call on her?"

"Only on Sunday afternoons. I ain't never missed one yet. If it's in summer or spring I usually take her a bouquet out of my garden, or if it's winter I generally take her a sack of candy."

"Any rivals?"

"Well, not any more. They gradually dropped off."

Perhaps it was because Bernardo, for a brief spell, was weary of the road. It may have been that he felt the need of a rest, of relaxation, of fresh energy that comes from steering one's activities into new channels. Or, again, the proposition may have presented itself in the aspect of a challenge to his powers. He closed his eyes in thought for so long that Mr. Guilfoil's spirits sank to his vici-kid shoes. Then the luminous eyes opened in a gleam of enthusiasm that scarcely concealed Bernardo's amusement.

"It is a call of the first magnitude," he announced grandly. "In the vast, eternal scheme of life, there come great duties which devolve upon us. Ordained and predestined as I am, committed to the furtherance of some preconceived and majestic force of nature, I cannot fail you, my brother."

He grasped the nervous hand of Mr. Guilfoil.

"Brother, you have come to the right man, the one man who can by his instrumentality assist—not command—in the untangling of the omnipresent snarl of life. What mysterious agency sent you here to-night I cannot tell. Those things are not given to me to understand. Yet there comes an irresistible urge from within my subliminal self to give freely of my gifts. Were it not so, believe me, my friend, I would spurn your offer."

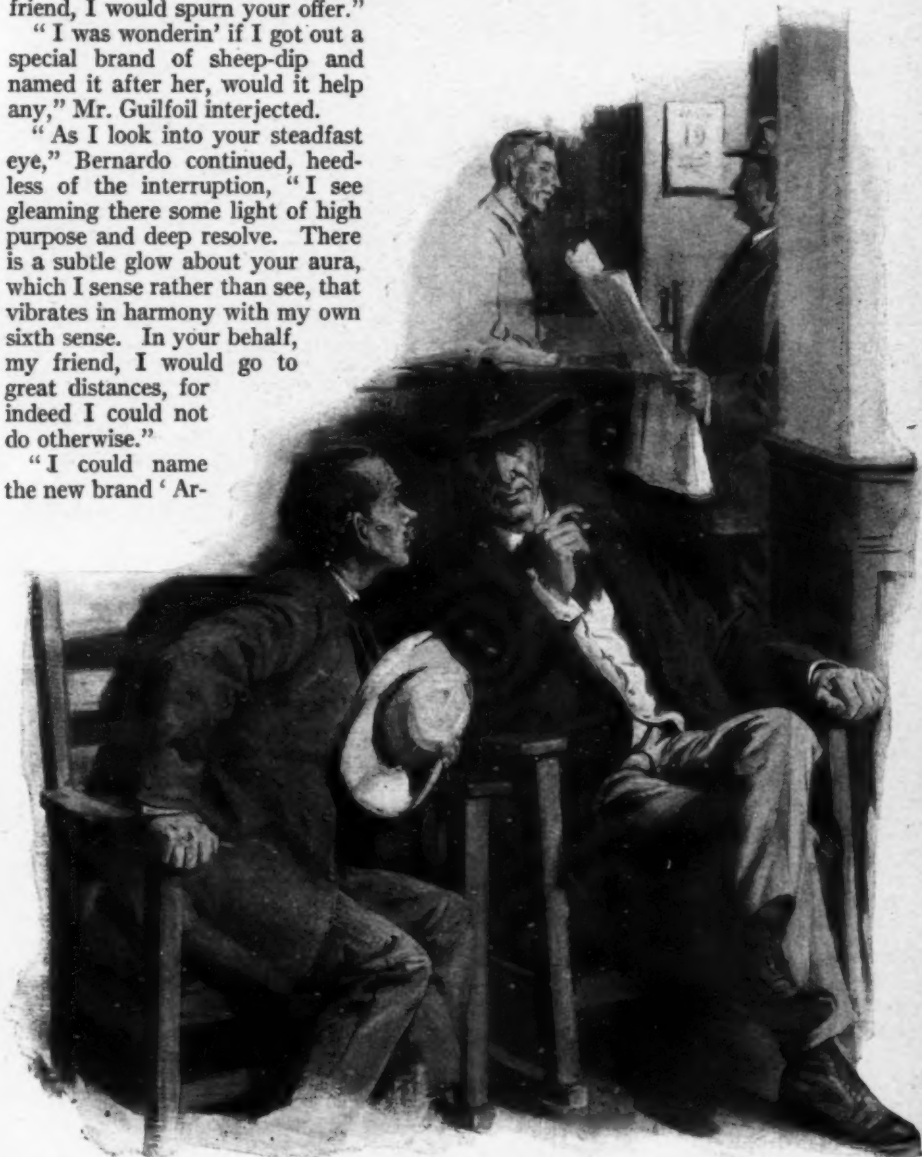
"I was wonderin' if I got out a special brand of sheep-dip and named it after her, would it help any," Mr. Guilfoil interjected.

"As I look into your steadfast eye," Bernardo continued, heedless of the interruption, "I see gleaming there some light of high purpose and deep resolve. There is a subtle glow about your aura, which I sense rather than see, that vibrates in harmony with my own sixth sense. In your behalf, my friend, I would go to great distances, for indeed I could not do otherwise."

"I could name the new brand 'Ar-

iminta's Pride,' and I could make it an extra fine dip, too."

"You appeal to my higher nature, to my altruism, my faith, and my hope." Bernardo rose to his stately height and shook back his long hair, for he was warm with his own oratory. "All the forces of telepathy, of suggestion, of superabundant and supernormal mentality and psychology,



"THIS IS A STRICTLY PERSONAL MATTER. THE FACT IS, IT'S ABOUT A LADY. TO-NIGHT I GOT THE IDEA THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO MAKE WOMEN SEE THINGS IN THEIR TRUE LIGHT"

shall be at our command. I feel it. Together we shall reach out into the infinite and draw upon the all-powerful sources of energy that are available for souls with the gift of perception."

"There ain't another woman in the world, so far as I know, ever had a sheep-dip named in her honor," the lover insisted doggedly. "Strange I never thought of it before."

"As the seers and mystics of a past age, as the wizards of the Nile and the oracles of Delphi plunged into these perplexing problems that beset a well-nigh blind and helpless people, so shall we, my new-found friend, use our own natural but neglected intuitive and intellectual powers to complete an end that is, on the face of it, of the highest cosmic importance."

The hypnotist paused for breath, and Mr. Guilfoil shot in a clincher.

"I'll have a lithograph of her face on every barrel of it!"

"Guided by a never-failing instinct, we shall not fail, my brother!" Bernardo, standing a foot taller than Mr. Guilfoil, spoke solemnly, as if he were pronouncing a benediction. "Repose thy soul in slumber to-night, and on the morrow we shall fare forth to woo and win. Do you get me, my brother?"

Mr. Guilfoil did get him, and they wrung hands on the compact.

III

THEY met again at breakfast. Bernardo's high spirits, as he sipped his morning coffee, were matched by Mr. Guilfoil's enthusiasm.

"I'm lookin' forward," the little man announced, "to the greatest week of my life!"

"My boy," said his new mentor, "it isn't going to take a week. One day, twenty-four hours, the thirtieth part of a month—that is sufficient. Besides, my engagements in the towns in this territory would alone preclude a prolonged stay. To-day being Sunday, I am free for our great adventure into the realm of Eros. What time does the train leave?"

Mr. Guilfoil was slightly worried.

"I was countin' on havin' you with me for a week," he murmured apprehensively. "You see, it's a case of long standin', and—"

"Time!" Bernardo threw back his head and smiled. "It is but a man-made mea-

surement of eternity. One day is plenty when inspiration serves us."

He beckoned to the waitress, a shambling, red-faced girl who looked upon him with frank admiration.

"Tilly," he said, lifting a biscuit from his plate, "this is a very remarkable piece of cookery. Now tell me, does it look strange to you?"

"Why, if it ain't all right, Mr. Bernardo, I'll get another."

"On the contrary, it is a very fine biscuit. I haven't tipped you since I've been here, have I, Tilly?"

"That's all right, Mr. Bernardo," the waitress protested. "It's been a pleasure for me to wait on a man like you, and you don't need to feel—"

"Nevertheless, you shall have your fee," said the man of mystery. "Look!" Very carefully he pushed his knife into the side of the biscuit, loosened the crust and, reaching in with his slender fingers, drew out a tightly folded two-dollar bill. "It is but a small return for your very excellent attention," he said as he handed the bill to her.

The girl accepted it dumbly, being too much astonished to speak. Mr. Guilfoil's eyes became round with wonder.

"I don't see how you do it!" he gasped. "It's almost supernatural."

"Come!" said Bernardo, rising. "Let us stroll down in the sunshine to the station and get our tickets."

As they left the dining-room, Tilly stood silently gazing after the greatest man she had ever seen, with wonder in her eyes. She determined that if she lived a thousand years she would never part with that two-dollar bill.

"You don't need to worry about tickets," Mr. Guilfoil assured Bernardo, after they had paid their accounts and left the hotel. "I have already bought them. From now till you leave me you're my guest."

When the train pulled in Guilfoil steered Bernardo to the parlor-car.

"No smokin'-cars for us!" he said. "We're goin' to ride to Paris in the style befitting a man of your standin'."

They were soon comfortably seated in the upholstered swivel chairs, and the presence of Bernardo made itself felt throughout the car. The porter, especially, was impressed with the distinguished appearance of the showman.

"Senatuh," he said with deep politeness, "could I bring you the mornin' newspaper, suh, what we took on at Joplin?"

Bernardo merely nodded, but the negro hurried.

"It's just the same wherever you go, or whatever you do, Mr. Bernardo," the sheep-dip mer-

"Ariminta Nicholson—she's the lady."

"I shall be honored."

"Yes, and she'll be flabbergasted, I know."



HE KNEW, AS HE GLANCED ABOUT THE WELL-ORDERED PLACE, THAT MISS ARIMINTA NICHOLSON WAS DESERVING OF SOMETHING BETTER THAN SPINSTERHOOD

chant remarked. "It seems like people just naturally take to you and recognize your abilities. I'm awfully anxious for Ariminta to see you." "Ariminta?"

She ain't never met a man of your stripe before."

The porter returned with the morning newspaper.

"Sam, put your hand out here," Bernardo commanded, as he took the paper. A full set of white teeth gleamed smilingly.

"Yaas, suh!"

Between his thumb and forefinger, Bernardo displayed a bright dime. With a quick movement he placed it in the negro's palm.

"Shut your fist—tight. You got that dime? Feel it in your hand?"

"Yaas, suh."

"Turn your hand over. Keep it closed. Still sure it's there? Absolutely certain?"

"Yaas, suh."

"Open your hand!"

The obsequious grin faded from the negro's face as he saw a round white button reposing on his outstretched palm.

"Where'd dat dime go?"

There was querulous disbelief and amazement in his tone. Bernardo smiled.

"It's there—on your coat." He reached up and deftly produced the coin from the lapel buttonhole of the porter's coat. "You should be more careful with your money, Sam," he said, and handed the dime to the amazed darky.

"A little fun and amusement," Bernardo explained to Mr. Guilfoil.

A half-dozen passengers were eying the pair, and the sheep-dip merchant had a curious feeling that he was coming in for a bit of attention.

"I suppose everybody on this car knows who you are," he remarked proudly.

"Perhaps. I've appeared in public so much—"

"But they ain't met you in person. Listen—when we get to Paris, we're going right up Main Street arm in arm. They'll talk about it for weeks!"

The conductor came through for their tickets. After he had collected them, Mr. Guilfoil followed him to the end of the car, ostensibly to get a drink of water.

"The gentleman with me is Bernardo the Great," he volunteered casually.

"You mean the old duck with the long hair?" The trainman had been on the road so many years that no one less than a President of the United States impressed him. "What kind of patent medicine does he sell?"

Mr. Guilfoil flushed.

"The gentleman," he said resentfully, "is a very distinguished man, and a friend of mine."

He turned and rejoined Bernardo.

"Under government management," he complained a moment later, "the railroads are going to the bow-wows. They don't give you no service, no nothin'." He gazed out the window. "And practically no scenery."

A rich and fertile landscape rolled past the window. It was a region of great barns and small houses, with industrious farmers at work in their productive fields. Bernardo shuddered.

"I find people more interesting than scenery," he told Mr. Guilfoil.

IV

WHEN the conspirators alighted at Paris, a pleasant surprise awaited them. On a bill-board opposite the station was emblazoned the majestic figure of Bernardo the Great, crouching forward with both hands outstretched. From the tips of his fingers jagged streaks of lightning emanated. Pasted across the top was a poster announcing the scheduled appearance of the great mystic two weeks hence.

"My advance-agent's work," Bernardo remarked. "It seems I am to play your city later on."

Mr. Guilfoil felt that it was a great day for him. His march down Main Street with Bernardo was a triumphal procession. Preceded by negro boys carrying their bags, they made their way along, punctuating their progress with many stops for introductions.

"My friend, Bernardo the Great," the proud pilot would say. "He's down to stop with me over Sunday"; and then, before there was a chance of any one person absorbing too much of the great one's time, he would drag him along.

"I'm going to have a large audience in this town," Bernardo told himself. "I'll know every sucker in it before the show begins."

At the post-office they met a crowd waiting for the Sunday distribution of the mail. The entry of Mr. Guilfoil accompanied by the majestic stranger was a sensation. Almost any stranger would have been an event in Paris, but such an imposing one as Bernardo, such a striking, distinguished-looking *somebody*—well! Upon being introduced, he was instantly recognized as the original of the bill-board portrait.

In the midst of the levee, Miss Ariminta Nicholson arrived. Mr. Guilfoil, if possible, became prouder and more agitated when he caught sight of her almost buxom figure and her cheery face. With one rapidly wagging forefinger he beckoned to her through the crowd.

"I want you to meet my friend, Bernardo the Great, Ariminta," he palpitated eagerly. "This is Miss Nicholson, Mr. Bernardo."

With a fine air of courtesy, Bernardo bowed over the hand which he clasped.

"It is a pleasure to meet any friend of

Henry Guilfoil's," he murmured. "I have no dearer friend in this world than Mr. Guilfoil, and it is always a pleasure to meet those whom he honors with his valuable esteem."

Ariminta had seen the bill-board. Her blue eyes sparkled with excitement, and there was a peachlike flush in her cheeks. For the moment she was once more a young girl. She glanced at Mr. Guilfoil, surprised that he should have such high connections.

"And are you going to be here long, Mr. Bernardo?" she inquired.

"Just ran down to spend the day with Guilfoil," the hypnotist said. "Had a telegram from the Governor of the State wanting me to stay over Sunday with him—but you know how it is when you meet an old friend." He dropped an affectionate hand on the sheep-dipper's shoulder. "After all, Miss Nicholson, old friends are dearest, aren't they? I am very fond of the Governor, of course, but—"

He glanced at Henry and smiled with such affection that Miss Nicholson's eyes widened. Never before had she suspected her suitor of so much charm.

"Mr. Bernardo," she said, with a glance at the post-office clock, "I'd like mighty well to have you and Henry come over to our house for dinner. I ain't got much to offer you, I'm afraid, and I'm only a plain cook, but if you'll come, I'll fry up some young chickens, and we've got plenty of garden-truck."

There was a gleam in the eye of the Paris visitor. Weeks on end he had been eating in railroad lunch-rooms, in country hotels, anywhere and everywhere except at a home table.

"Madam," he said with a deep bow, "on behalf of Mr. Guilfoil and myself, I accept with pleasure!"

"Just as soon as we can get over to my house and wash up, we'll be right over," Mr. Guilfoil added. "I was goin' to bring Mr. Bernardo over anyhow in the afternoon, 'cause I wanted you to meet him, Ariminta."

Within the hour—shaved, brushed, and combed to the last hair—the guests arrived at the Nicholson home. It was a modest, two-story frame house, standing well back from the street. Peach-trees grew in the front yard, and there were star-shaped flower-beds, marked out by bricks set on edge. On the porch an old-style hammock

was swung, and there were rustic chairs, deep and comfortable.

Miss Ariminta's life seemed dedicated to the care of the place and of her aged father. In his day, Nathan Nicholson had been a tolerably successful lawyer, and had accumulated money enough to keep him until the end of his life. When age overtook him and deafness almost entirely deprived him of his hearing, he had retired. He was a tall, spare figure of a man with a great shock of white hair, who was content to putter silently about the place.

He sat on the porch, reading, when Bernardo and Mr. Guilfoil arrived. The formality of an introduction was accomplished, but it is doubtful if the aged man heard a word that was said.

Miss Ariminta, fresh from the kitchen, hugely beaproned and with her sleeves rolled up, came to the door to greet them.

"Now you gentlemen just make yourself at home," she urged. "I'm busy for a while—got the pies and the biscuits right in the oven, and I can't leave 'em to do much entertainin'."

"We might look at some of the views in the stereoscope in the parlor," Mr. Guilfoil suggested, but Bernardo shook his massive head.

"I'd like to ask Miss Nicholson, as a special favor," he said, "if I couldn't go out into the kitchen with her and watch her at her domestic duties. You know, Henry, I sometimes think that woman achieves her highest mission in life in these simple, humble duties that mean so much to men of the world—like us, Henry. To see the busy housewife intent upon the preparation of a well-cooked meal—ah, Henry, old friend, such a sight arouses fond memories and hopes in all of us, does it not?"

Miss Ariminta blushed with pleasure.

"I never in my life heard such a beautiful sentiment expressed in just that way," she replied. "I want you to come right out into the kitchen, Mr. Bernardo, and make yourself perfectly at home. Henry can sit out here on the porch and talk to dad till dinner's ready."

Talking to dad was such a one-sided proposition, inasmuch as Mr. Nicholson made sketchy and irrelevant replies to what he judged were Mr. Guilfoil's remarks, that the sheep-dip merchant finally gave it up and strolled out into the garden to look at the flower-beds. It would be much better,



WITH A STEP THAT WAS LIGHT WITH HOPE, YET
WITH THE UNCERTAINTY OF A MAN TREADING A
MINE-TRAPPED FIELD, HENRY GUILFOIL MADE HIS WAY TO
THE KITCHEN DOOR

he felt, to leave his spokesman undisturbed with Ariminta.

V

IN the kitchen, Bernardo sat comfortably in a chair tilted back against the wall.

His hostess, moving about the steaming stove, was a picture of domestic efficiency in his eye. He knew, as he glanced about the well-ordered place, that Miss Ariminta Nicholson was deserving of something better than spinsterhood. She peeped into the oven to see how her pies were coming along; she lifted a pot to the back part of the stove; she changed the position of a stew-pan that it might have more heat. Throughout the kitchen were pleasant commingling odors of cooking food.

For once, Bernardo's conversation lacked the brilliancy and spontaneity that was his source of power. He realized that he must have an idea; that a coup was needed to complete his mission. So he went down deep for it, and it came—at first in nebulous fashion, and then full-formed.

Several minutes later he found Henry in the garden, contemplating a variegated bed of pansies.

"Henry," he said, as he approached, "I promised to help you win her, and I've done it. She's waiting for you."

It was difficult for Mr. Guilfoil to believe that the great moment of his life had actually come. Hope and doubt combined to produce a peculiar, questioning smile on his lips.

"You don't mean that she's accepted me?"

"No, Henry, but she will. Just go in and propose to her—that's all.

For the first time in her life she's in the proper receptive state. In her present condition she cannot refuse you."

"Bernardo," asked Henry, his upper lip quivering with excitement, "what do you mean?"

"I mean," replied the trickster, "that she's hypnotized. I mean that if you ask her now she cannot refuse you. Fear no rebuff. It is your hour of fate. You asked for help, and I'm pointing the way. Victory is in your hands!"

Despite the magnificent promise of the situation, it was Henry Guilfoil's Fabian nature to quibble a bit.

"But if she's hypnotized," he queried, "what I want to know is this—if she accepts me now, will she stick to it when she wakes up?"

Bernardo smiled tolerantly.

"That is the beauty of it—she will. She'll never know exactly how it happened, but there will always be a sweet, elusive memory of something infinitely sweet and tender. This day will ever be fresh in her memory, rose-scented and splashed with a golden glow."

Ineffable joy was written on Mr. Guilfoil's countenance.

"That's wonderful!" he exclaimed. "Wonderful! Tell me more about it. How did you do it?"

"There is no time for talking now," the hypnotist objected. "When they are in this particular kind of hypnotic state it does not last long. On the stage, under extremely favorable conditions, I've seen 'em last twenty minutes—never longer. Miss Ariminta is a difficult subject. I wouldn't guarantee that she'll stay under the influence more than ten minutes at the most." He stopped to glance at his watch. "Not more than five minutes still remain to you."

"Bernardo," said Mr. Guilfoil, who was too excited to employ the "mister," "I'm goin' in to ask her!"

With a step that was light with new, definite hope, yet with the uncertainty of a man treading a mine-trapped field, Henry Guilfoil made his way to the kitchen door. Bernardo sighed as his eyes followed his friend into the house.

If the truth must be told, even the great mystic himself was uncertain what the result would be. His mind flashed back over his long, eventful career. He thought of the dark horses he had seen come in under the wire, and of the long shots that had paid big winnings. He had a sporting interest in Henry Guilfoil, and he hoped he would triumph.

The sunshine streamed down through the trees and caressed him with its warmth.

From a field close by the lowing of a cow for her calf came to his ears. It was half town and half country. A boy with a kite that darted crazily in the air came tearing down the unpaved street in front of the place. A two-seated carriage with a fringed top passed, bearing a load of young people on their way from the country to spend the day in town. A humming-bird darted swiftly across his path, and above a rose-bush he saw a butterfly hovering, its gorgeous wings moving in soft undulations above the rich and fragrant blossoms.

He did not stray far from the kitchen door, for he was waiting to hear any sounds that might come from within, and wondering what result they would indicate. One never can be sure in which direction a bold stroke will react. He came nearer, almost timorously.

After a while Mr. Guilfoil appeared, saw Bernardo, and came to him. There was something in his stride, in the carriage of his head, and in the swing of his body, that bespoke the conqueror.

"I asked her, and she's mine!"

The mighty hand of Bernardo gripped the sheep-dipped paw of Mr. Guilfoil with a sympathetic pressure.

"My heartiest congratulations, brother," was all that he said, but his soul sighed with relief.

A burden had been lifted from his conscience. Once more he had seen his judgment of human values signally confirmed. Again the brain that was steeped in the ways of trickery and fraud, of great odds and inspirational guile, had won the palm of success.

"I went in the kitchen, and there she was, just as natural as life, whippin' up a pan of mashed potatoes. She saw me, and she asked me to hand her the pitcher of cream. It looked like she was in her perfect senses. I handed it to her, and she poured some in the potatoes and went right on whippin' 'em to a froth, almost. For a minute I was sure it was too late, for it looked like the spell had worn off; but I just took a long chance. The very first words I said to her was, 'Ariminta, will you marry me?'"

"She never missed a stroke with the potatoes—just looked up at me with a funny, kind sort of look in her eyes, and said, 'Yes, Henry, I'll marry you. I been wonderin' why you didn't—' And then she stopped right short off. I said, 'Ariminta,

do you mean it? Do you know what you're sayin'? Are you in your right mind?' I asked her that, and she smiled again. 'Of course I mean it,' she said, and when I went up to her—you know, to give her a—well, she wouldn't let me, and said that could all come later. Then she made me come out here and keep you company till dinner was ready."

He stopped to run his fingers reflectively through his hair.

"Mr. Bernardo, you're the best friend a man ever had. I ain't questionin' that; but I'll swear she didn't look nor act like a woman that had been hypnotized. I want to ask you, man to man, do you really think she was? You don't think you could have been mistaken?"

A great sadness seemed to fall upon the mystic. Here was a man who had admitted that by his own efforts he had been unable to win the woman of his heart; that he had proposed ten years before, had been refused, had talked sheep-dip to her in the long interval, and was in a fair way to get no farther. He had invoked the aid of the master mind—and now he ques-

tioned the method that had given him his heart's desire.

"'Man's inhumanity to man,'" said Bernardo, "'makes countless thousands mourn.'"

It sounded well, but it meant nothing to Mr. Guilfoil.

"When I spoke to Ariminta she seemed perfectly sane and normal in every way," he insisted.

Very carefully Bernardo rolled back the right sleeve of his coat.

"The hand is empty. Watch me closely. Now!"

There was a rapid flash of a hand moving faster than the eye could follow. When it stopped, Bernardo held a full-blown rose with the stem between his thumb and forefinger.

"No matter how long the right man keeps the right woman waiting, she's always in a hypnotic state when she hears the magic words. She accepted you, Henry; therefore I can assure you that it was perfect hypnosis."

Having justified himself, he pinned the rose on Henry's coat lapel.

UNDER WHICH KING?

THE fight I loved—the good old fight—
Was clear as day 'twixt might and right;
Satrap and slave on either hand,
Tiller and tyrant of the land;
One delved the earth the other trod,
The writhing worm, the thundering god.

Lords of an earth they deemed their own,
The tyrants laughed from throne to throne,
Scattered the gold and spilled the wine,
And deemed their foolish clay divine;
While, 'neath their heel, sublimely strove
The martyred hosts of human love.

Such was the fight I dreamed of old
'Twixt labor and the lords of gold;
I deemed all evil in the king,
In demos every lovely thing.

But now I see the battle set—
Albeit the same old banners yet—
With no clear issue to decide,
But right and might on either side.

Yet small the rumor is of right,
For the bared arms of might and might
Brandish across the hate-filled lands,
With blood alike on both their hands!

Richard Leigh

The Strangest Stock-Market in the World

THE CURB MARKET ON BROAD STREET, A UNIQUE NEW YORK INSTITUTION WHICH IS AN EXTRAORDINARY SPECTACLE AS WELL AS A HIGHLY IMPORTANT FINANCIAL CENTER

By Edwin C. Hill

A VERY English Englishman, doing New York in the sedate and painstaking way of his breed, brought up in mid-afternoon under the heroic shins of Mr. Washington at the steps of the Sub-treasury. Rooted there by sudden and overpowering amazement, he discovered in the near distance of Broad Street a close-packed mass of creatures apparently human, yet like nothing human he had ever seen before.

Confined by ropes upon the bottom of the gorge, and overlooked by clifflike buildings, sheer and stupendous, this mass, shot through with weird and vivid coloration, writhed, leaped, swayed this way and that. Groups charged other groups and were attacked in turn. The air was slashed by gestures that menaced the heavens, by arms seemingly escaped from the bodies that owned them. Fingers in sets of two, three, and five at a time, also curiously detached, insanely shot up vertically or snapped horizontally sidewise, in mad play with the whirling arms.

Arising from the gorge, echoing and re-echoing from the cliffs, were the ululations of a madhouse—shrieks, exultant yells, heavy mutterings of anger; deep-throated growlings such as proceed from the cages of a menagerie just before feeding-time; savage laughter like the mirth of devils when the virtuous totter; whistling calls remindful of gulls summoning a gale—all merging and melding into a steady roar of singular harmony and appalling charm, like nothing in the world so much as the overwhelming chorus of great waters rushing over stones.

Lifting his eyes to the cliffs, the astonished visitor observed strange doings along the upper levels of this obviously lunatic community. Windows were popping with grimacing faces—female, it seemed, as well as male—with grotesque and distorted features, out of drawing, like the heads of gargoyles; with arms and hands that leaped from a mysterious interior to convey cryptic signals to the upraised eyes of the leaping creatures in the gorge. At rare moments, when the roar of the gorge subsided, the Englishman imagined that these demons of the upper levels were calling to their familiars of the pit, summoning them by raucous shrieks. He noted with a queer sensation in his diaphragm that demon knew demon by the color of a head-dress.

The tourist turned rather plaintively to his American guide.

"Balmy, quite balmy!" he observed. "But why do your authorities loose them in the streets? I should think your great financiers—your Mr. Morgan over there—would apprehend violence. It's most extraordinary—I have no words to express my amazement at your customs. Bally lunatics at sport among your great banks, and the bobbies not caring a hang! I fancy I need a cooling drink."

"My dear fellow," the American replied soothingly, "looking at that Broad Street collection of Johnny-jump-ups from your point of view, you are absolutely right. It's like a madhouse on holiday; crazy actions, crazy hoots, crazy colors. But actually, it's as sane as sunlight, as orderly and systematic as the calendar. What you have been looking at is the New York Curb

Market in full swing at the close of a heavy trading day. What would you say if I told you that this money mart of the open street is the biggest financial market, save one, in the whole world?"

"I should say that you needed a cooling drink rather more than I," returned our Englishman.

"Not a bit of it," countered the American patiently. "What I'm telling you is sober fact expressed in hundreds of millions of dollars. That bunch of gymnasts of incomparable lung-power is the incubator of American finance, the hatchery for many, if not most, of our stock companies. It is the warming-box to which flock our hopeful inventors, prospectors, promoters, discoverers, developers, and just plain money-hunters; carrying all kinds of eggs, good, bad, and china; projects born in hardship and toil, and schemes drifting out of pipe-dreams. Some of those whirling dervishes down the street could borrow a million on their moral credit; for others the jail beckons. But that's the make-up of the world in general. Their apparently crazy actions are really ordered expressions of perfected discipline. Every lifted arm, every snapping finger, is a signal of purchase or sale, as the brokers in the street take orders from the office windows. Fortunes are won and lost to the accompaniment of the mad gestures and madder yells that horrify your intellectuals. Now what do you think?"

"I think I shall go away from here," said the Englishman. "I urgently require a quiet corner and a long, cool beverage. I find myself craving repose."

A UNIQUE INSTITUTION OF NEW YORK

A good many of our people, Southerners and Middle Westerners and folk from the washes of the Pacific, here to get the thrill of New York, and adventuring in strange quarters with the open-eyed zest of children, have felt pretty much as that Englishman felt when they emerged from the relative tranquillity of Broadway or Nassau Street and came upon that roaring, swirling whirlpool of the Curb. No stranger within the house of Father Knickerbocker can be reproved for suspecting that a considerable number of disordered minds are rampant among a helpless citizenry. No doubt some of our visitors will retain all of their lives the shock and exhilaration of their first survey of the Curb Market. just

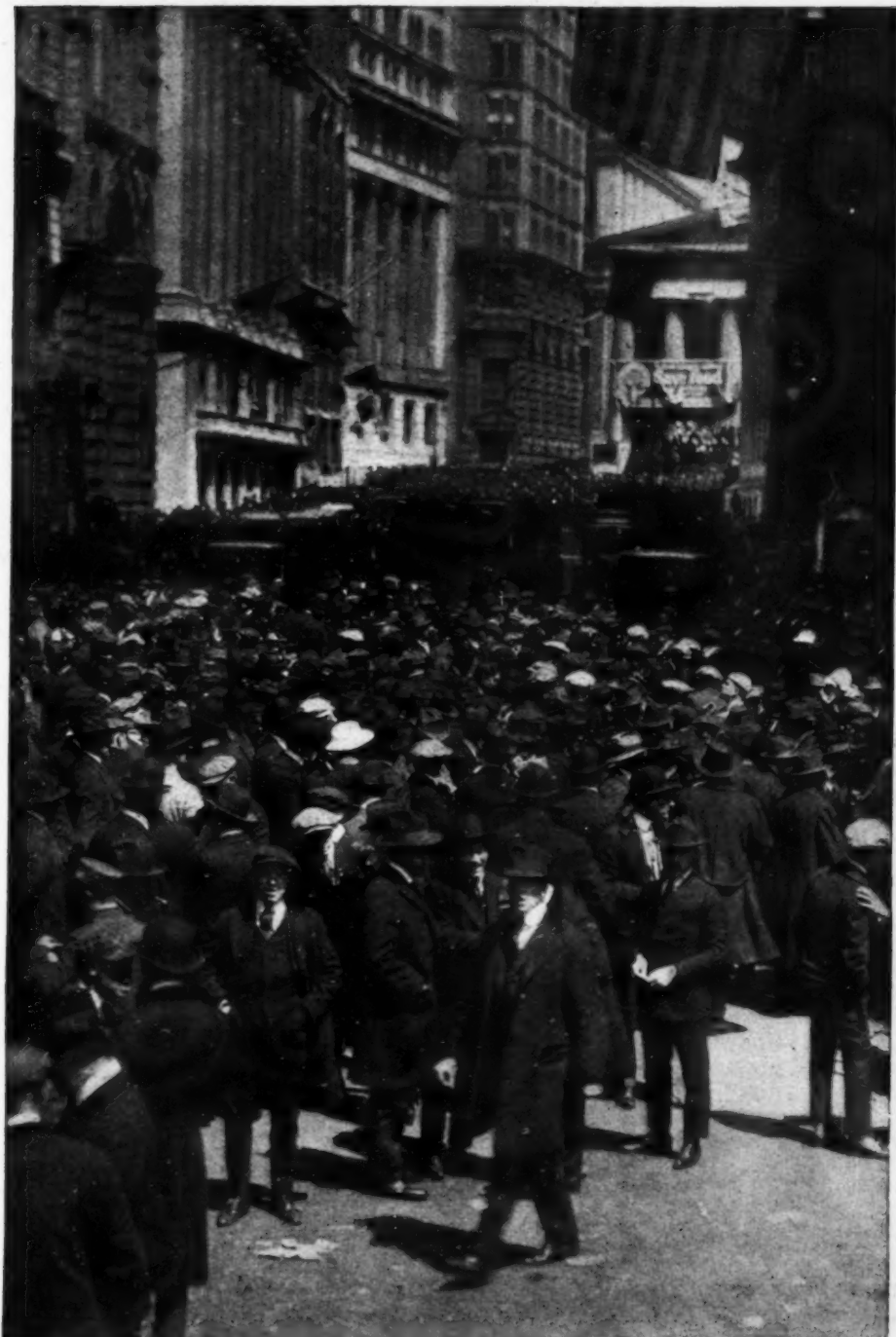
as the boy could never forget, who heard from a Pennsylvania farm, many years ago, a distant rumble that drew him on for miles and miles until, at the close of the day, he walked into the battle of Gettysburg.

The Curb is so wildly unlike any other financial market on earth, so fantastically dissimilar from any other market-place where men meet to buy and sell stocks and bonds and money-rights, that it stands as one of New York's most peculiar institutions. It is a point of interest no more to be neglected by the visitor who wants the real New York than the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Natural History, the Zoological Park, the Statue of Liberty, or Mount Woolworth. The Curb is finance set to jazz music. It is money doing a shimmy. It is credit at a ghost-dance. It is the spirit of youth skylarking at old men's games.

The Curb trades in millions one moment, then stops short to plague a newsboy. It tears control of a gold-mine from an unlucky operator, and pauses to auction a puppy-dog. It runs amuck over the bounding quotations of new silver stocks, and drops everything to haze its latest bridegroom. It loves a row, dotes on a sensation, welcomes missionaries and motion-picture actresses, abhors peace, and is as nervous as a witch. It pursues bargains with the avidity of *Shylock*, and tosses twenty-dollar bills to a pretty flower-girl or a decrepit vendor of lead-pencils. It is like nothing else under the astonished sky that is its only roof.

For something like forty years there has been a Curb Market, although it was only in 1910 that the present Curb Market Association was incorporated, and definite rules and regulations were evolved for administration by responsible officers. In the old days the Curb was a loose affair, with no real organization, no set regulations, no officers; shoved from pillar to post, and in no good odor, to tell the truth.

Conditions have changed for the better all around, for, like other institutions which come to see the light, the Curb is reforming from within. It is getting measured for a frock coat, and is contemplating a silk hat. These vanities, emblems of respectability, go with a home, with a settled position in life and a roof over one's head, and the Curb yearns for home and roof after so many years of knocking about and of exposure to heat and cold and rain.



BROAD STREET AND A CROWD OF CURB BROKERS, LOOKING TOWARD THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE (ON THE LEFT) AND THE UNITED STATES SUBTREASURY, THE PILLARS OF WHICH APPEAR AT THE END OF THE STREET—THIS SHOWS A COMPARATIVELY CALM MOMENT AMID THE TUMULTS OF THE CURB MARKET

Like *Topsy*, the Curb "just grewed." Its origin was the obvious demand, years ago, for a market where men could buy and sell unlisted stocks—that is to say, stocks neither listed nor traded in by any department of the "big exchange"—the New York Stock Exchange. One perceives the whys and wherefores of this demand easily enough. Progress, the healthy, natural development of things, urgently demands a trading-place for industrial and commercial possibilities—"prospects"—as well as for industrial and commercial accomplishments of proved worth and demonstrated profit. There has to be a trading center for eggs of unpedigreed fowls, on the chance that now and then an egg will hatch, just as there has to be a market for full-fledged chickens. The Curb makes a market for men's hopes. The New York Stock Exchange has room only for men's successes.

Let us consider the same thing from another view-point. The Curb is the magic box from which the hopeful look to extract something out of nothing. Call it gambling, if you will, or merely speculation; it exists because most men, and a lot of women, have an ineradicable instinct for taking a chance.

No doubt, in the majority of its operations, Curb speculation, the rise and fall of the stocks dealt in, is legitimate, being based upon a real prospect of lucrative development, closely following some new commercial venture or some fresh scratching of the earth's surface. These baby ventures, raw companies incorporated to manufacture clothes-pins, to make tires for motor-cars, to build wireless towers, to distribute steam, to produce cinema plays, to dig for gold, copper, or silver, to bore for oil, to start fresh ventures in soap-making, candy-boiling, safety-razor manufacture—a thousand hopeful stabs at fortune—have a right to a little spot in the sun. Provided that honest men with honest expectations are behind them, they can scarcely be denied the privilege of seeking capital and advertisement; and the Curb provides these necessities.

Such new enterprises approach the Curb seeking money essential to their development, and offer shares to all willing to take a chance. On the other hand, opportunity is provided in this open street trading, now as at the beginning, for optimistic speculators and investors to "get in on the ground floor," as it is called in the jargon of the

Street; to invest cheaply in shares which may some day repay double, quadruple, or tenfold the value of the investment.

THE HAZARD OF CURB FORTUNES

The interrogation-point is always fairly obvious in infant offerings; but Curb annals are crowded with amazing tales of ten-cent shares bounding up to ten-dollar values; of humble stock which went begging at forty cents and arrived at a price lofty in dollars and a place among the silk-stocking securities of the New York Stock Exchange. Only a little while ago, an oil stock which has made a great rumpus in Broad Street was selling at eight dollars a share, largely because the company was known to own tracts of timber. Investors who bought at that price and held on to their shares could have sold at one hundred and eighty dollars scarcely eighteen months later, and though the stock afterward declined, it is still around one hundred and forty.

A Nevada prospector located and charted a district which, he surmised from experience, should give up good yellow metal, though there had been no visible signs of it. The shares went upon the Curb, I believe at fifty cents, and enough of them were sold to secure funds for the development work. A "strike" was speedily made, and the shares jumped to ten dollars. Simultaneously, the shares of companies holding adjacent or near-by leases largely advanced in the legitimate prospect of similar good fortune.

That is the sort of thing the Curb functions for. It finds milk for baby enterprises. When the babies grow up—if they ever do—they are welcomed in the big exchange.

The Stock Exchange, dealing only with what are—or are supposed to be—tried and approved enterprises of large capital and solid base, has neither time nor inclination for trading in prospects. But the big exchange, comprehending the human urge that is expressed in the outdoor market, tolerates the trading in unlisted stocks, and even throws a protecting mantle over it. A sort of unofficial entente exists. Most of the powerful Stock Exchange houses have their representatives on the Curb, and deal extensively in Curb securities.

These houses have used their influence steadily to inspire the Curb to closer scrutiny of the character of shares offered to



AN OFFICE-BUILDING ON BROAD STREET, OVERLOOKING THE CURB MARKET, SHOWING THE WINDOWS FROM WHICH ORDERS ARE TRANSMITTED TO THE BROKERS IN THE STREET BELOW BY A PREARRANGED CODE OF SIGNALS

investors, and much of the buccaneering of the past has been stopped. There is still a good deal of plain pirating, a good many rotten eggs are still brought to the Curb incubator, too many outrageous swindles are still dangled before the public in the guise of some gilded incorporation or other; but the Curb officials are very earnest in their assertions of determination to clean house and kick out the crooks. I shall tell presently how they purpose to do it.

But I was speaking of the old days, when there was no responsible association of outdoor brokers. Then, in the eighties, there came together in front of the Mills Building, in Broad Street, just around the corner from the Morgan office, and directly

in front of the Stock Exchange, a small company of outlaw traders—outlaws in the sense that they had no official standing of any sort, and that they included some pretty slippery customers. They had no right to clutter up the street, of course, but their gathering was tolerated by the police, and was even then a convenience to the big brokerage houses. Storms buffeted them, and sometimes, muffled to the eyes, they stamped about ankle-deep in slush or snow as they cried their strange calls and jotted down their cabalistic figures. On some bitter days the late D. O. Mills, a benevolent man, used to take pity on their plight, and would permit them to flock within the spacious rotunda of his building.



AN OFFICE-BUILDING ON BROAD STREET, OCCUPIED BY CURB BROKERAGE FIRMS WHOSE CLERKS SIGNAL ORDERS TO MEN PURCHASING AND SELLING SECURITIES IN THE STREET—TO AN UNINFORMED VISITOR THE SIGNALERS SEEM LIKE "DEMONS OF THE UPPER LEVELS CALLING TO THEIR FAMILIARS OF THE PIT"

They were better off than their successors of to-day, for nobody troubles to invite the present Curb to grateful shelter from the blazing sun that sizzles Broad Street in midsummer or the arctic blasts that sweep it in winter. The street brokers are always on the job, six days a week, calling half of Saturday a day, except for holidays; taking the good with the bad and the bitter with the sweet; buying and selling with the same liveliness though the rain drenches them, the sun bakes their heads, or the cold creeps to their marrow.

E. S. MENDELS, FATHER OF THE CURB

In those early days they had no organization, but they centered about a remarkable man. His name was Emanuel S. Mendels, but everybody called him Pop. One might almost say that he originated the Curb, if any man did. Certainly he loved it, and all his interests were wrapped up in it. Through sheer integrity and force of character he became the arbitrator of all disputes, the one-man court for the settlement of all difficulties. He interpreted the unwritten code of the loose body of brokers. He strove to give it dignity, and was a terror in his day to the hooligans and evil-doers who invaded the street market.

When new projects approached the Curb for market privileges, it was Pop Mendels who appraised the honesty and good faith of the applications, and nobody, it is said, ever found cause to charge that he had favored a dishonest enterprise. His authority was limited, and then, as now, outlaws worked among legitimate traders, calling themselves Curb brokers, as outlaws do today; but he accomplished an extraordinary amount of good and put the Curb upon its feet. The old "Curb Manual" was his work, and this document was the basis of the new rules and regulations of the official, incorporated association. When he died, in 1911, there was very keen sorrow among the younger men who had followed his wise and prudent guidance.

Nowadays the Curb is steered and guided in formal style. There is a board of directors of fifteen, with large powers. There are committees on arbitration, complaints, membership, welfare, finance, and law. Executive offices are maintained at 25 Broad Street, where statements of companies whose shares are traded in are on file. Effort is made to investigate the character of stock-offerings by requiring, in advance

of listing, a statement of the assets, liabilities, earnings, and expenses of concerns offering stock. A list of officers with bank references is demanded. Sworn statements and verified copies of prospectuses of new companies are indispensable. Certificates of title, with map of description of property or plant, must be submitted. Fifteen per cent of the company's stock must be outstanding and in the hands of the public.

The established requirements work protectively upon the whole, although some crooked concerns do get listed and seize the chance to mulct the public. This was notoriously true in the recent flurry of speculation in oil prospects, but the officials of the Curb maintained before the district attorney that not a single member of the Curb Market Association had been involved in the rascality, nor had a single complaint been received against a member. The sinners were fly-by-nights who had roosted briefly upon the Curb, like greedy sparrows settling upon the feast of corn daily spread before the decent pigeons of Madison Square. In these outlaw cases of real scandal it was doubtless true, as the legitimate Curb contended, that the pirates obtained false ratings and submitted false references and false affidavits.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE CURB

The Curb has volunteered to aid the district attorney in uncovering such frauds and punishing such swindlers, and has asked for the aid of the newspapers, requesting the papers to refuse advertisements of illegitimate projects. A welfare committee examines new stock offerings, and whenever the scrutiny is unsatisfactory it levels an all-embracing questionnaire at the suspects. If the answer displeases, the Curb itself places whatever evidence and information it may have obtained in the hands of the public prosecutor, and begs him to take action.

Quotations for shares are originated by the companies interested working through individual brokers. A Curb stock is advertised to be launched at a set figure, say fifty cents, and at that figure it starts. Presently, if the Curb is at all interested in the offering, the fluctuations begin, up or down as the case may be. Near the end of a day's market, the representatives of two papers, or sheets, that make a business of recording Curb prices move among the brokers, acquiring information of transac-

tions, and noting the last quotations. The final notations reappear as Curb prices for that day in the financial news of the daily papers.

These quotations are not guaranteed by the Curb Association, because there is no ticker, but both *Blue Sheet* and *White Sheet* are more or less supervised, and they are accepted as the best available means of gathering and distributing the indispensable statistics of daily trading. False and misleading quotations are recorded occasionally, because of the venality of individuals, but the association professes to watch these matters alertly.

The Curb is recruited from pretty much every kind of condition of keen, ambitious youth. Many of its members are the sons of prominent bankers and brokers, placed upon the Curb by their elders to gain through hard knocks a foundation knowledge of the practical workings of finance. Many college graduates with a leaning toward finance have started upon the Curb before rising to eighty-thousand-dollar seats upon the big exchange. Office-boys, quick-witted and fired by zeal to get ahead, have found standing-room in the enclosure, and frequently have made good. One of these lads, who started by borrowing three hundred dollars, made three-quarters of a million in ten years.

In recent years fifteen Curb brokers have been able to buy Stock Exchange seats. One of these began with less than nothing in actual cash, but he had unlimited moral credit, and used it to deal in high-priced Standard Oils. A year or so ago he bought a million dollars' worth of Liberty bonds with his spare funds. Curb brokers are proud of the fact that their membership subscribed for sixty-five million dollars in Liberty bonds and put three hundred thousand dollars in cash into the hats that were passed around for war-service work.

CURB BROKERS AND THEIR DIVERSIONS

There is never a dull moment when the Curb howls between 10 A.M. and 3 P.M., its set and prescribed hours. There is always something doing of an exciting or a diverting nature. After all, many of the brokers are just kids, and are too loaded with "pep" to be wholly serious, even about dollars. Gusts of temperament hit them in the midst of terrific market fluctuations. One fiercely hot day a summer or so ago, while the trading in war babies and

war brides was also at blood heat, a youth stuck his head out of a window high up on the north side of Broad Street and sired:

"Temperature now at 106 bid, 108 expected!"

And the market stopped in a tempest of laughter.

Nothing short of a deluge or a tornado drives them to cover. Several years ago, on a May day, while it was raining cats and dogs, and the brokers were sticking it out in rubber hats, oilskins, and rubber boots, looking more like fishermen from Fulton Market than traders in stocks and bonds, a cloudburst and a big wind struck them simultaneously. The ropes with which the police department had enclosed them became surf-lines, and groups of rubber-clad brokers gripped hard as they bowed before the driving storm. But the huddled groups raised their voices in song, for throats trained to Curb barking made light of the rush of waters and the howling of the wind, and no storm could rout their high spirits.

Horse-play starts over nothing, and sometimes infects all but the staid oldsters. One irrepressible youth furtively knocks off another's hat. The indignant victim grabs and throws the hat nearest to his clutching hand, and in a minute the air is full of sailing head-gear. These outbreaks are simply surplus steam escaping from surcharged boilers, inevitable and necessary reactions from the high tension and high pressure of the business.

Curb brokers work desperately fast and under a breaking strain, and their nerves and tempers fray quickly. Let a truck-driver with an uncivil tongue essay to push through the throng. It will be his lucky day if he gets clear without being yanked from his perch and given a taste of good manners.

They scrap among themselves because of this same nervous tension. Not so long ago, in the middle of the mass, I saw a Jew and an Irishman, both youngsters, hard at it, swing and smash; and Israel was acquitting itself nobly when one of the big traffic policemen intruded and spoiled the fun. Yet, an hour afterward, the combatants, each bearing traces of the bout, were elbow to elbow in Robins's—the Curb's favorite refectory—taking their drink in perfect amiability. Such fights usually mean nothing.

Any little episode to break the monotony

of trading is welcomed by the Curb. One day a stranger carrying a cocker spaniel offered stock in the beastie at ten cents a share. The whole Curb left a business of millions to deal in "dog, common," ran the forty shares up to twenty-three, sold it to a specialist in gas, and turned the nine dollars and twenty cents, minus the usual two per cent clearance for outsiders, over to the quaint promoter.

You can buy almost anything on earth in the New York Curb Market. If I craved an elephant, I should call up my friend Jack Fryer and submit the commission with every expectation of swift and economical fulfilment. If the Curb hasn't got it, it will get it for you somewhere. Vendors of all sorts haunt Broad Street, knowing the open-handedness of brokers; vendors of almost every imaginable thing, diamonds and other precious stones, animal pets, bargains in serge and silk, Panama hats — smuggled, one is told — mechanical puzzles, second-hand motor-cars, fountain pens, Irish lace, and cameras. It is said that if one knows just where to apply, one can place a bet upon a horse-race, but this may be a calumnious rumor. I do not precisely know.

There used to be a shrewd Jewish pedler of jewelry who frequented the Curb, and probably can be found there still. On one occasion stories of rapid profits in mining stocks had been tickling his ears. He went to the office of the president of a company whose stock was climbing in the market, and tried to sell the official a diamond stick-pin; but they couldn't agree on the price of the showy gaud.

The pedler had an inspiration.

"Steer me right in Jumbo, and I'll give you the pin," he said.



A NEARER VIEW OF AN OFFICE WINDOW DIVIDED INTO FOUR SIGNALING-BOXES FOR TRANSMITTING ORDERS FOR THE PURCHASE OR SALE OF SECURITIES DEALT IN ON THE CURB MARKET

"That's a bet!" said the president. "Go up to the window and get a call on a thousand shares for sixty days. You can have it for the pin."

Before the pedler got back to the office, he was worth four hundred dollars more than when he went away—four hundred dollars made in two minutes. There are a good many Curb yarns similar to that, but then, too, there is the other side of the shield, for if some men make money others must lose.

The welfare of the Curb's soul has long been the concern of missionaries and itinerant preachers. Every so often some zealous reformer appears at the market and

offers prayer that the brokers may mend their ways. I remember the unsympathetic comment of a traffic policeman on one such occasion:

"You're away from your game here," scoffed the policeman. "These folks are calloused!"

"From battle, murder, sudden death, and the money-lenders may the Lord preserve us," shouted the evangelist as he made his retreat.

This seemed scarcely fair, for, after all, the Curb borrows much more extensively than it lends; and no doubt in extremities, bankers being what they are, it needs the consolations of religion, and blessings rather than anathemas.

The Curb hopes that it is about to enter upon a new era—a period of peace and plenty in its own house and with a roof over its head. And by this move, more than by any other, it contemplates and plans the elimination of the fly-by-nights, the grafters and swindlers, who infest it willy-nilly because there is no authority to deny them the use of the open street. Any-

body has a right, you understand, to trade in the Curb market, provided he can get somebody else to deal with him, for the simple reason that the public street is open to all; but when the Curb forsakes the street and takes to cover it will be able to bar undesirables and to purify its business. It will be a club, just as the Stock Exchange is a club.

The money for a home has been raised, to the amount of nearly a million dollars. A realty company has been formed, and committees are at work upon the plans. It may be expected that within a year, or perhaps two, with the tardy approval of the New York Stock Exchange, the most colorful and interesting stock-market in the world will desert its long-time stand in Broad Street to carry on its operations within four walls.

One wonders if walls will ever restrain the explosiveness of these folk, and if the sedateness of indoor business will steal away the Curb's color and interest. Let us hope not. The institution is much too diverting to lose.

THE CZARDAS PLAYERS

Long ago in an Eastern land a queen was singing;
Through the palace window's prisoning bars,
Through the flower-sweet garden under the stars
Her song went ringing.

And the wind that heard and the stars and the rose
Held the song in their hearts the long years through;
It echoes to-night when the east wind blows,
And we play her song to you!

A tale of ancient armies loosed beside Nile-water;
The sun is veiled in their dust at noon,
And men seek death like a dancer's boom
In the red slaughter.

The surge of trumpet, the snarl of drum,
The clatter of hoofs as the horsemen come—
Tidings of fights fought long ago
Our violins bring you—we know, we know!

Queens and battles of years long fled! Now the song changes;
Softly, softly our music plays
You back to youth and its golden days;
Then the theme ranges—

Wakes a sorrow that now is not,
Touches the edge of a dream forgot,
And for you a space the vision smiles,
At the end of all the miles!

Edna Valentine Trapnell

Ancestry

BY CLARENCE MEILY

Illustrated by George Brehm

THE rôle of his father's son is a difficult and, on the whole, a disheartening one. Dr. Gerald Mabie had found it so, never more poignantly than since the famous old doctor's death, which had left him with a large and highly specialized practise that obviously did not trust him.

Dr. Jethro Mabie had enjoyed an international fame. His dictum was authority on two continents. His son had grown up under the shadow of this greatness, submerged by it, lost in it, as stars are hidden by the sun.

Gerald had not particularly desired to be a doctor. His tastes, such as he had, had lain rather in the direction of art; but the incubus of what had already become the family tradition lay hopelessly upon his future. He was dedicated to carry on his father's work.

But carrying on his father's work meant, as a matter of fact, little more than becoming his father's office assistant. True, the gilt lettering on the door of the reception-room now read: "Drs. Mabie and Mabie," but the addendum was generally recognized as a mere concession to the ties of blood. It was the old doctor who was still the doctor, both in public estimation and in his own.

This situation, distressful from the first, became, on Dr. Jethro's death, a near approach to tragedy. The old doctor had been a high liver and a free spender, and there was little left in the way of inheritance for Gerald beyond good-will. And, despite his best efforts, he could not hold the practise. It drifted away to rival practitioners, carrying with it beyond recovery the family's accustomed standard of living, until, at thirty-seven, Dr. Gerald found himself still his father's son, with all of the liabilities and practically none of the perquisites of that distinction.

The family, however, had at least partially freed itself from the tightening coil of misfortune. Dr. Gerald's two sisters had married, doing in material as in other respects very well. About this time his mother died. Gerald sold the pretentious family residence, gathered together such other moneys as he could, and endeavored in a brief and fevered burst of speculation to retrieve the financial basis of what he felt to be his rightful place in the world. He knew little about business, and the attempt met with predestined collapse. He regretted it less on his own account than because of Hilda Leighward, whom, in a non-committal and futile way, he was engaged to marry.

This romance had been going on for a good many years—much too many, as Hilda believed and Gerald conceded. It had begun in the days of their rosy youth, when she was eighteen and he was twenty-five, when he was still within the radiant glamour of the parental triumphs. It had occurred to neither of them then that Gerald might not duplicate his father's success. They had dreamed much, but never of anything but love and victory.

Hilda's parents were poor, and both she and Gerald recognized that love must condition itself on victory. Victory would be gained when Gerald had won to his father's side in the sight of the world. They waited, therefore, for the accomplishment of this detail.

It was the bitterest feature of Dr. Gerald's failure that by it he had disappointed Hilda. Not that she voiced her disappointment in words, or even by look or sign; but the ebbing of her buoyancy as the years advanced, the fading color in her cheeks, the little lines that began to trace themselves about her mouth, the telltale threads of silver in her dark hair—all charged him in silent accusation which he could not meet.

It had been chiefly in the wild hope of redeeming from barrenness the rich promise of their youth that he had plunged into

find no way to eradicate him. To sum up his activities in a word, he was a black-mailer of land titles.

A defect in a title to valuable property was the thing upon which Mr. Cosgrove fed. For as little as possible he would acquire an outstanding claim, and then confront the owner with the alternative of expensive, prolonged, and more or less hazardous litigation, or a compromise much to Mr. Cosgrove's advantage. As he was,



"IT DOES NOT SEEM THE RIGHT THING TO DO," DR. GERALD SAID GRAVELY. "I AM PREPARED TO PAY TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS," SMILED MR. COSGROVE

the mad speculation which had placed the capstone upon his unsuccess.

II

It was at this time, in the nadir of his fortunes, that Gerald received a letter from J. Judson Cosgrove briefly asking him to call at the latter's office.

Mr. Cosgrove's position in the community was rather more peculiar than enviable. He was an attorney without standing, much more prosperous than respected, a member of a bar that did not want him, yet could

withal, a man of force, a capable lawyer, and a profound student of human nature, the compromise was generally effected.

It was an illustration of this latter quality that, when Dr. Gerald called in obedience to the letter, he was received with a deference that subtly poulticed a sorely wounded pride. Mr. Cosgrove opened the interview with tactful praise of Dr. Jethro, less as a physician than as a man.

"He was most generous," declared Mr. Cosgrove, "and, I think, not always wisely so. I have in mind a particular circum-

stance that you may possibly recall—the finding among your father's effects of an unrecorded deed to the lot at Spruce and Market Streets where the First National Bank Building now stands. The deed was placed on record by his executor. The property, as you know, belongs to the Wilton estate."

"I don't remember about the deed," said Dr. Gerald. "We trusted everything to the executor and our attorneys; but I believe my father did loan General Wilton some money many years ago. I suppose the deed was intended as security, but I feel sure the loan must have been paid, though why the property was not deeded back I can't imagine."

"Do you think you could find out definitely whether the debt was paid?"

"I suppose I could, by going over my father's old ledgers."

"Well, that can be done later," said Mr. Cosgrove reflectively. "Of course, the growth of the city has made the property very valuable now, and an outstanding title, whatever its basis, has a corresponding importance. I am so sure of this that I am prepared to pay you and your sisters a substantial sum for your deed to me of the lot."

"But if the debt has been paid I have no right to deed the property to any one but the Wilton heirs!" cried Dr. Gerald, vaguely indignant.

"My dear sir," said Mr. Cosgrove, "you have an absolute legal right to make a deed to anything, whether you own it or not. I can show you court decisions in plenty on that very point. Whether your deed conveys the property is my affair and my risk. I do not ask you to guarantee anything, or misrepresent anything, or obligate yourself in any way. If it turns out that the loan was paid, I simply lose my money, that's all."

Dr. Gerald rose.

"It does not seem the right thing to do," he said gravely.

"I am prepared to pay ten thousand dollars," smiled Mr. Cosgrove.

The two sisters of Dr. Gerald were liberal and devoted. He knew that, as far as they were concerned, the ten thousand would be his own. On him, too, devolved the responsibility of decision; but as he left Mr. Cosgrove's office, walking with free, erect carriage, as one who has no need to be ashamed, he did not as yet face this re-

sponsibility. He held in his mind only the glittering lure of the price, as one holds a fairy's pleasant promise against the bondage of reality.

He knew perfectly well both Mr. Cosgrove's reputation and the character of his business. He knew that the lawyer would have offered no such sum unless he saw clearly how, by blocking a sale of the lot, or in some such manner, he could regain his outlay fourfold. He knew that Cosgrove's methods were illegitimate and his ends despicable; but he held this knowledge also in abeyance, as one involuntarily suppresses a disagreeable memory.

III

DR. GERALD'S first care was to search through his father's effects until he found the time-stained ledger containing the Wilton account. It showed, as he had surmised, the original loan, regular payments of interest for a period, and then a credit of the principal sum and the closing of the account. There seemed to have been no other paper evidence of the transaction, and there was no entry or memorandum concerning a deed.

At all events, the debt had been paid; and with this knowledge, the practical question of what he should do suddenly outlined itself.

The direct and simple course, the one immediately suggested by his natural probity, was to make a deed to the Wilton heirs without compensation of any kind. It was their right, inasmuch as the debt was paid; but the obvious is not always the easy, and facile judgments may not cover every claim. Did not life owe him something, after the despoiled years? And what of Hilda?

Dr. Gerald sat in his room in the indifferent lodging-house where he had taken up his abode, careless of the slender duties of the day, determined to think things out. The threadbare carpet, the nondescript furniture, the musty walls, formed a fitting background for such an exercise. They became almost vocal in argument.

"We are the end," they whispered; "the end of all your bright visions. We, and our yet more dismal successors—we will end what hope began."

And thereupon, as if drawn by disastrous magic out of the sea of time, his youth rose up before him—detached, wistful, displaying its dreams and asking:

"Had I no right to these?"

The dream of artistic creation came to him again. He might have succeeded in it, had circumstances given him his bent. Was it yet too late? The dream of fame, not the reflected glory of his father's, but fame on his own account, the world's applause, the consciousness of power—he had missed those. And the dream of Hilda—

He winced as at a physical stab, and shook off the illusions. He would consider the matter practically, carefully.

Ten thousand dollars was not much, yet it could be made to mean escape and reconstruction. At all events, it was the last opportunity likely to be offered to him. With bitter self-reproach—the satiric self-reproach of middle life, more tragic than the wan reconciliation of age, more bitter than the tempestuous shame of youth—he asked himself whether he dared reject it. For it was life itself now that he would reject, and life still throbbed within him with undismayed possibilities.

Insensibly his thoughts returned to Hilda, and he saw that his decision must concern her more than himself. She had trusted him, this girl, with her own divine youth. She had given it royally, as do only those who give for the joy of giving; and he had failed her as he had failed himself. Her hopes, her dreams, entwined with his own, had withered in the fruitless desert of his ineptitude. Must he meet her loyalty and generosity only with a further sacrifice on the dead altar of his self-respect? Who was he, anyway, to claim the luxury of integrity?

He rose and paced the floor. The thought of Hilda scorched him, maddened him. Her warm arms were open to him, her soft lips brushed his cheek, her hair caressed his temples. All the thwarted and repressed desires of the bankrupt years rose to curse him. They stormed about him in mad rebellion. They looked at him out of Hilda's eyes.

And yet, as he walked there, he was not alone. With him there paced a ghostly company, father and grandfathers and great-grandfathers—a long line of ancestors, honest men—yea, men of honor. They were a part of him—nay, they were all of him. He was of their blood and their tradition, and no tempest of circumstance could change his heritage. There were things he could not do, because they would not have done them; capacities of surrender

he did not possess, because they would not have surrendered; self-mercies he could not show, because they had been strong. For good or ill, for weal or wo, for how much of ill and wo it mattered not, he, too, was a man of honor!

In the gray of the early morning, Dr. Gerald, haggard and worn, knocked at the door of Mr. Antrim, his father's lawyer. After a long time he was admitted to the library and was received by the old attorney wrapped in a dressing-gown and blinking sleepily.

"I want you to draw a deed for me to sign, conveying that lot on the corner of Spruce and Market Streets, where the First National Bank Building stands," said Dr. Gerald. "I have the description here."

Mr. Antrim opened his mouth to protest, stared hard at his visitor, and stifled his objections. He fumbled in the drawer of the library-table for pens and paper.

"Who is the grantee?" he asked.

"The heirs of General Wilton," said Dr. Gerald quietly.

IV

LATER in the day, after obtaining his sisters' signatures, he took the deed to the office of the Wilton estate, where he found Mr. Sneed, the manager. He explained the purpose of his call briefly to the frankly amazed man, and tendered the deed. Mr. Sneed, whose astonishment gradually gave way to a condescending amusement which he endeavored to conceal, grasped the paper eagerly.

"Very honorable of you, doctor, I'm sure!" he declared. "Very high-minded, indeed! I was aware of the outstanding deed to your father, and intended taking the matter up with you. We are negotiating a deal involving a transfer of the lot. Of course, we have to clear the title, and this deed of yours does it very nicely. I know Frederick and Claire, the old general's grandchildren, will join me in grateful appreciation of your courtesy. You know them, perhaps?"

"I've seen the boy," Dr. Gerald said indifferently.

"Ah, yes! Fine young chap—looks like the old general." Mr. Sneed babbled on, striving to hide a train of silent laughter behind a soft white hand. "By the way, I was given to understand that a man named Cosgrove was interesting himself in the title."

"Yes, he was," admitted Dr. Gerald.

"H-m!" murmured Mr. Sneed, staring again. Then he stifled a noiseless guffaw. "Well, well! Very honorable, I'm sure! You are still in practise, doctor? I must drop around to your office some time. Cer-

unable to do it. An ancestral will, not his own, not voicing his own desire, had held him back. He had been helpless in the grip of a discipline framed in the years preceding his birth.

The immediate result was that he dared



"WE HAVE TO PRESERVE THE HONOR OF THE WILTON NAME," SAID THE BOY, RISING PROUDLY

tainly, we are very much obliged to you for the deed."

Dr. Gerald left Mr. Sneed's presence uncomforted by any uplifting sense of pride or self-approbation. Instead, his estimate of his own worth sank still lower. He had lacked the moral courage to do wrong, even for Hilda's sake; or, rather, through some strange infirmity of the blood, he had been

not see Hilda, dared not lift his eyes to her face. The very thought of her brought intolerable shame. As between the two conflicting loyalties, he had been loyal to himself, only to betray her. He had blotted her out of his life, though he could never blot her out of his heart.

He went to his own office and sat there alone, there being no patients to disturb

his solitude. Around him were the familiar paraphernalia, the instruments, the bottles, the specimens, the books—among the latter his father's *magnum opus* on the spinal-cord. The sight of these things, the very atmosphere of the rooms, stale with the spectral reminders of obsolete drugs and forgotten maladies, choked him like an acrid fume.

Out of his sickening disgust, his humiliation and despair, and the sting of unrelenting memories, came the realization of the one course that shame had left him. He must vanish, ghostlike, amid his ghosts. Silently, viewlessly, without clue, he would disappear, breaking with his sisters, with Hilda, leaving them to a conjecture which was yet more merciful than the truth.

The hours passed unnoticed during his reverie. The level sunlight proclaimed late afternoon when he raised his head with an awakening perception as the outer door of the reception-room opened and he heard cheerful young voices beyond the panel of his door. He rose and opened it. Two persons stood there—a youth barely of age, and an exquisite girl a few years younger. Dr. Gerald bowed.

V

"GLAD we found you, doctor," said the boy with a haughty friendliness. "You may know me—I am Frederick Wilton. This is my sister Claire."

Dr. Gerald bowed again.

"Won't you come in?" he asked, making way for his young visitors to enter the consultation-room.

Their presence in the musty room was like the beginning of spring. He felt it so, and as an unconscious mockery of his own autumn, as if youth challenged him again from the inaccessible vantage-ground of the spent years. He waited their business in dumb misery.

"We called about the deed to the First National Bank Building lot, doctor," began the boy, while his sister regarded him with steadfast admiration. "I am afraid, if you will excuse my saying so, that you have rather misunderstood the situation. I got it all out of Sneed an hour ago."

He spoke with a certain patronage, as the man of affairs might to one who knew little of business.

"You see, when my grandfather borrowed that money from your father, he was what has been called 'land poor.' He had a

great deal of town property, not worth much in those days, but very little ready money. So, when the loan fell due, and he found himself unable to pay in cash, he deeded this lot to your father in payment of the loan. That was the way the loan was paid. Old Sneed knew all this when you gave him that deed to-day. When the old crook came chuckling to me about your mistake, I got the truth out of him before I fired him."

"You fired him?" echoed Dr. Gerald in surprise.

"Certainly I fired him. I won't have a crook managing my affairs—will we, Claire?"

The girl smiled and indicated her admiring assent.

"Well," went on the boy, "when my grandfather gave your father the deed, it seemed he didn't really want to part with the lot for good, so he took a writing from Dr. Mabie to the effect that if at any time he wanted to pay the loan in cash, with interest, he was to have back the lot. That's why your father never put his deed on record. Sneed found the letter from Dr. Mabie, acknowledging the arrangement, among my grandfather's papers, but he never said anything about it to you, because he is a crook."

"If you had compared the date of the deed with the date of the payment of the account, you might have gained an inkling of the truth."

He smiled with the cheerful arrogance of a Wilton heir. Dr. Gerald sighed.

"I don't know that it makes any difference," he said. "I've given you the deed."

"Difference!" cried the boy. "Of course it makes a difference! It makes all the difference in the world. I made old Sneed figure up the amount of the loan with compound interest to date before I bounced him. He's good at figures. And I've drawn my check for the amount. It's the only condition on which I could accept your deed. We can afford to be honest, can't we, Claire?"

He tendered the check. Dr. Gerald took it like one fumbling through a mist.

"We have to preserve the honor of the Wilton name," said the boy, rising proudly. "I know it's what my grandfather would have done, and my father."

He spoke reverently, and his sister's lips moved in silent assent as she held him with her shining eyes.

Dr. Gerald got to his feet and tried to

speak—a mumbled acknowledgment that he himself did not understand. All he knew was that the check, half seen through the dimness of smarting tears, called for more than forty thousand dollars.

"We are very happy to have renewed the family acquaintance, aren't we, Claire?" said the boy. "I hope we shall see you again soon, doctor."

He held out his hand, and the older man grasped it half in awe. They went out of the time-oppressed room, these patrician children who could afford to be honest, taking the light with them, leaving behind the

worn man who, though he could not afford it, had been honest also.

Yet they did not take all the light, for, amid the gathering shadows, Dr. Gerald now read clearly the check that held for him the promise of a new day. He folded it at last and bestowed it in his purse. As if the ghostly line of his forebears had grown to visible presence about him, smiling upon him with serene, approving eyes, he bowed his head to receive their unearthly benediction. Then, shutting the doors upon their quiet company, he hurried up the street to Hilda's house.

Life

BY CHESTER L. SAXBY

Illustrated by Charles N. Sarka

ALWAYS Tom Kerndon had been restless. At a very early age he had exhibited that not uncommon tendency of the small boy to poke into all manner of unexpected places. He had exhibited it to an uncommon degree, too. His hard-worked mother labeled him "fidgety," and complained to the neighbors that he would not "stay put." It seemed a physical impossibility for him to settle down for half an hour at a time. No matter how much was said to him, of threat or inducement, or in what spirit of cooperation he undertook the task of keeping out of the way, fifteen minutes appeared to be the extent of his indulgence in any quiet, restrained occupation. Investigation claimed his every waking hour; exploration and discovery allured him.

The neighbors looked upon him as a nuisance.

"A prying child," they said, with no intention of studying him. "What will he be at next? It's time the boy quit his snooping and learned something. If I had the teaching of him—"

They did not understand Tom Kerndon. This was not to be expected. His own mother did not understand him, and had given up the attempt to bring him into line

with the rest. At eight, he came home with notes of protest from the teacher against his habit of making a disturbance that was "not malicious, but upsetting to the class." At ten, he still pestered his father with questions as broad and far-reaching as an adolescent and inquisitive mind can make them. At twelve, he found the most engaging books a bore, and at fifteen he was no better.

At that point Mrs. Kerndon stopped trying—if one may say she had ever very systematically tried, what with the many duties of a large family—and let him occupy himself as he would, so long as he did not get under her feet. This he rarely did, for his restlessness took him farther afield, making it just so much harder to find him when he was needed. That was Tom Kerndon in his youngster days.

The days of his youth automatically achieved some curbing of this restlessness. It was not given that he should long remain in school. The drafts upon a large family require individual denials. Tom had to find a job and clothe himself. He did this quite willingly, and then and there became involved in a scheme of life that demanded conformation of individual tendencies to corporate modes of behavior.

The training hurt. It was nothing else than polite confinement; but he conformed along with others—the more easily, perhaps, because he had never had a definite object in his restlessness, and because his work offered in its own sphere a certain amount of pertinent and impertinent inquiry.

Early manhood apparently found Tom Kerndon cured of his boyish "fidgets." His mother, peering not too closely into his ambitions and into the apprentice type of work he did, saw only that her boy showed increasing steadiness. No alarming traits had developed. He was a good boy to look upon, with a fine, strapping physique, a mop of black, curling hair, and a pair of dark eyes altogether jolly and impelling. He had many friends and a little pocket-money.

"He's outgrown his little peculiarities, and I might have saved myself the worry," she told a friend. "The lad had to be growing; it was the shooting pains that kept him on the jump. Now that he's got his height—you see?"

But Mrs. Kerndon made a mistake in her easy summary. Tom Kerndon's body was not to blame for his restlessness; it was Tom Kerndon's mind behind it all—a wondering, insatiable mind. Macaulay's mind might have been of such a kind, but Macaulay's mind, turning naturally to books and writing, found satisfaction near at hand, while Tom Kerndon's mind had not been trained to literature.

At twenty Tom had simply redirected an urgent proclivity into new channels. There were friends to be discovered, humanity to be explored, social enjoyments to be looked into. His mother thought he had lost his restlessness; he had not. It made him a leader in his set; it sent him charging into new places and new pleasures; it gave him charm of initiative.

The fellows liked him, trailed after him. The girls regarded him as a young god of the most fascinating creeds, and set themselves out for him. He danced well, talked well—because no one interest interposed to narrow his view of the world in general. He moved in an orbit of gaiety that he had somehow built. The unfortunate thing was that it could not last.

"That's the stuff, Tom!"—thus his newest suggestion gained commendation. "It takes you to start the ball rolling. Love of life—that's you, old man!"

Tom Kerndon shook his head at that.

"Love of living—I guess you'd be right there. But love of life—it couldn't be that. I don't know life, *real* life; neither do you fellows. This little junk town is a thousand miles from life."

"You don't say so! What's the trouble? That's funny talk."

"What's up now?" another crowded in. "Got a flea, Tom? Scratch it!"

"Yes, I've got a flea." Tom Kerndon was grinning; he grinned at everything. He looked round at the circle. "There's the ocean, for one thing. I'd like to be on the ocean." The idea was not new, for he had given the seas more than one vital thought. They called to his imagination; he wondered about them, about the lands they touched. "I was thinking about being a sailor. That's life for you!"

"Come on!" some one laughed. "We'll go down and pretend we're drinking up the ocean. Heave ho, lads! Tom's the captain. Where do we steer, captain?"

They treated the idea as a plain joke; but they did not reckon with Tom Kerndon. His mind had reached out; it had sniffed salt water—that age-old beckoning element—and the restlessness had spoken from deep within him.

Tom Kerndon was twenty-one that summer. The crux of the matter lay there. His mention of his desire at home jarred his confident mother past speech and brought down his father's mumbled objection in a preoccupied way. The elder Kerndon had once been restless himself.

"I'm going," said Tom. "I can't stay at the job I'm at. The experience will be good. Maybe I'll get over being unsatisfied after one trip. It's only three hundred miles to San Francisco. I've saved enough. It's my own affair."

That, of course, permitted of no argument; it was his own affair. His friends tried to change his mind for him, and one—she was of the other sex—using a potent weapon to fight this mad caprice, put out her hand, touched his sleeve with a quaint little movement, and asked him if it *was* strictly his own affair.

He looked into her pretty face with the light wave of silky hair framing it, at the trim little nose that tilted adorably, at the firm white hand upon his coat-sleeve—and blinked his eyes a moment. Then he pulled himself together.

"I'll be worth a good deal more to—to



everybody afterward," he replied.

And with that he went to San Francisco and down to the water-front.

II

IN the interval between his arrival at this place of vantage and the signing of articles for a voyage into the unknown, Kerndon experienced the qualms of uncertainty, due in part to the lonesomeness of his thoughts, and in part to his observation of the sort of men who shared his intention. With him, this was life that he undertook to taste; with them, it was existence. He saw the difference.

A HUGE, WIDE HEAD WAITED FOR HIM, LITTLE, PIERCING EYES, DEVOURING JAWS. HE WENT SICK AND CLUNG DIZZILY TO THE ROPE. GOD, WHAT A FATE!

He had his first chance with a coastwise trader, and, when on the point of acceptance, was advised against it by a seasoned salt.

"A rum go," muttered the able seaman with a shake of his greasy head. "No

chance on them tramps! Sign on fer a lay, kid—no short sailin' like thet there."

"What is a lay?" asked Kerndon, turning about without argument.

"A lay—thet's a share o' the profits. Twenty a month—pah!"

So twenty a month was refused. The captain laughed at him, but Kerndon minded that very little. On the fourth day he signed with a whaler.

"It's a lay I want," he spoke up frankly. "Is that what we get?"

"Right, boy! A two-hundred lay! Whaling's the game for that. A year's cruise and money in your pocket at the end of it. Ever sailed?"

"No," replied Kerndon, and was surprised that it made no difference. "I want to see life," he appended, on second thought. "That's why I'm here."

The captain measured his brawn, and, cocking his head, said pleasantly:

"You came to the right place. We see considerable life in a year's time!"

After purchasing some ship's clothes, Kerndon went aboard. The vessel was a brigantine of some three hundred tons, and carried fore-and-aft sails on her mainmast. This meant nothing to Kerndon then but a puzzling interweaving of ropes and jumble of yard-arms. He stared strangely at it all until ordered below into the forecabin. There in a narrow, dim, unventilated space two score men were packed for a year's voyage. He found many of them discussing the prospects from every angle.

"Five whales," declared a rangy Swede, "suits me—two hundred and fifty."

"The mate says three hundred," maintained a light-haired German. "She'll make more with good luck. I got a girl—"

The speaker broke off, aware of the laughter; but Kerndon did not laugh. A mental picture had risen before his eyes—a small white hand lying upon his coat-sleeve, a wistful, imploring face. Three hundred dollars, perhaps four hundred—He shook himself. *Life!*

The Anscope put out through the Golden Gate and down the coast. The air was strongly salt and bracing. Kerndon conquered the roll of the deck without sickness, was assigned to the starboard watch, and began learning the ropes. Night came down chill and blowy; the reeking fore-cabin was at least warm. Kerndon slept.

With the easy adaptability of youth, he accommodated himself to the hard work

and poor food aboard ship. To his restless nature the restless sea spoke eloquently. Here were vision, distance, expanse; here were men from the four corners of the world, men with the spice of difference and with stories that whetted his imagination.

They were making for Hawaii, the land of wonder; the gorgeous tropics. Slushing, tarring, painting—should he care about that? Scouse—the sailor's name for corned-beef hash—and pea-soup for dinner—the fare would change. He grinned.

Eight days out a school of finbacks was sighted by the lookout with the customary—

"There she blows!"

Kerndon, scanning the sea eagerly, saw the spouts that shot straight up from the surface of the water.

"Finbacks!" a boat-steerer spat out disgustedly.

No boats were lowered. The scorned creatures swam lazily past the ship, returning contempt for contempt and showing the deck, so near they came. Into the distance they melted.

The watch grumbled. Why not finbacks? In most minds the two hundred dollars had grown already to four hundred. Here was wealth allowed to escape. At this rate, under such a captain, what had they to expect? They calculated afresh.

"I got a girl that's waitin'—" said the blond German.

"I counted ten o' them big fish," came the mutter.

Kerndon laughed.

Five days later even Kerndon caught the fever of calculation, when a sperm-whale blew two miles off the port bow. A long pull over a heavy sea in the second mate's boat, a hard drive of the harpoon, and the whipping of the line as the stung leviathan sounded—down—down—

Crash! The whale had breached, and a mighty fluke high in the air dimmed the sunlight and descended. Another harpoon bit deep. The creature was off, flying through the water. Skimming the surface, the cockle-shell of a boat sped at an incredible rate, deluging the crew with spray. On—on—to the end of the world!

The pace slackened. White teeth glistened in the mulatto boat-steerer's face. A mountain of flesh and blubber was theirs, a mountain surrounded by a crimson sea of blood. They had won the race.

"Fohty bar'l!" exulted the mulatto.

The other men took it up. They enlarged upon it.

When the ship sailed up alongside and the cutting commenced, Kerndon marveled. His inquiring mind centered as vividly, as ardently, upon the yield from this dripping enormity of fat as it had previously centered upon the expanse of the opalescent sea. He began to figure; it was impossible not to figure; on every side of him, working knee-deep in the oozy mass of blubber, men figured—aloud. With the hoisting aboard of the tremendous head that held the precious baleen, estimates were rife. Fifty dollars a man, the word went round.

Nauseated by the odor of the frying fat, they kept at it with a will. Fifty dollars! The men began to sing. All night they worked; all night they sang.

In the morning the starboard watch, weary to death, tumbled below. Some were still singing. Kerndon fell asleep, feeling the light, sure touch of a small white hand on his jumper sleeve. He woke to hear the men in violent altercation.

"Articles be damned!" a harsh voice breasted the wave of dispute. "It don't tell nothin' in them articles about the slops ye're drawin', does it? Yuh make me sick. Who's payin' fer yer drawers an' socks? Four hun'erd dollars, is it? It's one big iron dollar, matey."

The idea had power to annoy but not to convince.

"They don't work that on me," growled one. "I signed on a lay."

"Ten bucks 'd buy whut I got on muh back," another chorused.

"You ain't sellin' out o' the slop-chest, yuh fool!" the harsh voice reminded carelessly. "Go on an' holler! The big iron dollar the ol' man pays off with."

Kerndon blinked his eyes and said nothing. He had said nothing when pea soup was served him for the sixth time in a week. He had said nothing when ordered aloft to tar the rigging and slush down the yards and masts. But he wondered a little.

The wondering made him restless. He had got into the habit of dreaming, and the habit was so new that it produced hard thinking in his waking moments. He wondered a little now, because somehow the dreaming involved a substructure of three or four hundred dollars. And when Kerndon became restless inquiry had to follow.

The boat-steerer, of whom he inquired, showed his brilliant teeth.

"Yoh lookin' foh a fohtune, boy?" The tone was insulting. "Dis hyah ain't no pirate ship. Go on about yoh business! Yoh get yoh dollah, suah 'nough."

"A dollar!" articulated Kerndon. "A dollar for a year's hard labor!"

The cross-breed native of the South Sea shrewdly recalled something.

"Ain't yoh tell da cap'n yoh want see life? Ain't yoh seein' it?"

Kerndon took himself off to reflect over this. Even then he said nothing. He was not one to talk much. In his boyhood he had kept his observations largely to himself; the years had not changed him; here a change was even less likely.

The Anscome drifted without purpose in the doldrums. The heat, the humid air, bore down intolerably, cloyingly, pantingly. For three days no wind came. The forecastle housed a pestilence; sleep held off, giving place to vile tobacco-smoking and anathema as vile, as thick, as the smoke.

On deck the vista, too great for the human eye to measure, sated the gaze with its burning sameness. Hot, fitful gusts made prickles in the skin. Scouse, smelling stronger and stronger, pea soup, bean soup; tepid water to wash out parched mouths. Life? A mockery!

Into Kerndon's mind crept the germ of preying disgust—for his station, for his associates, for the masters of the vessel, who ate the fresh fish that the men caught over the side and sent never a taste forward. He had laughed—ah, yes, one laughed who did not know. When one found things out—the "big iron dollar"—filth, drudgery, scouse—the masters—*masters*—aye, and slaves!

All at once there was born in Kerndon's rebellious brain the desire to be free of it all. He had gone sailing after life. His restlessness had led him on; it called him back now. Life had been his for the taking—a small white hand upon his arm—hope, cleanliness, striving, friendship, love!

There came a breeze. With all sails sheeted home, the Anscome laid a course due west. Hawaii, the land of enchantment! Kerndon kept his silence and waited.

III

THEY came all in a breath upon a haze of purple, a dancing, rosy monument set fairylike in the sea. In the roadstead they

anchored, and Kerndon watched his chance, picking out ship after ship whose American name promised salvation.

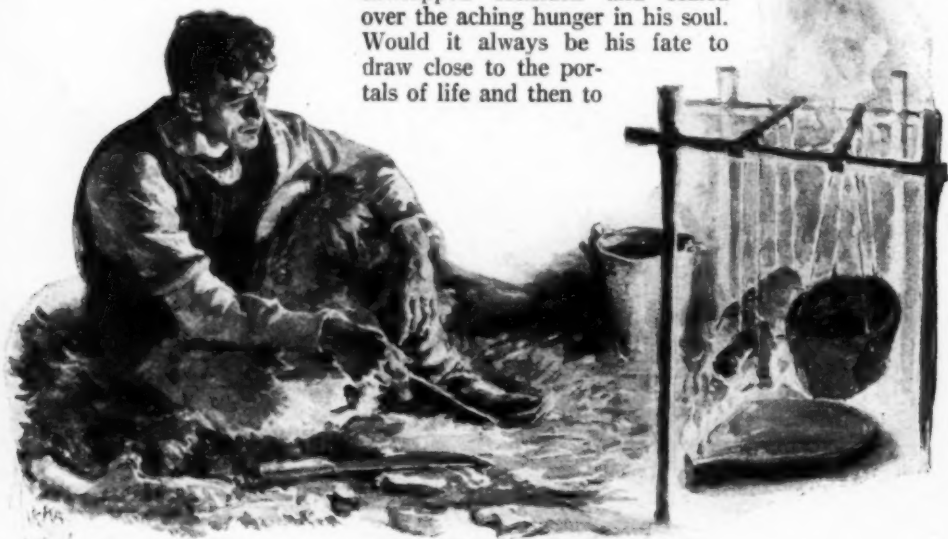
When shore-leave did not come, grimly he smiled to himself, tracing with his eye the distance to the shore. It angered him beyond reason when at nightfall the vessel moved out of its anchorage to a position three miles from land. He knew then, if he had doubted before, that the big iron dollar was no figment of the imagination; that he was a prisoner under guard who might be expected to try for freedom.

On the second afternoon, with the captain ashore, the determination matured. In trousers and jumper he stole astern and climbed down a rope. A mile—how easy! He had often swum two miles. He looked down, prepared to drop. A black fin lifted above the surface twenty feet away. A huge, wide head waited for him, little, piercing eyes, devouring jaws. He went sick and clung dizzily to the rope. God, what a fate!

He clambered back on deck, shaking in his legs. Knowing eyes seemed to leer at him. What need for them to guard? He could only wait, like a prisoner behind heavy steel bars.

Seven days in port, and not once called to man the gig that daily went ashore! Seven days of staring at the land that beckoned, golden days set in opal and jasper! Seven nights as palely white as a soul that knew no sin!

Then the Anscome sailed. Gazing back, a tempestuous wrath enwrapped Kerndon and sealed over the aching hunger in his soul. Would it always be his fate to draw close to the portals of life and then to



HE KNEW WHAT IT WAS TO BE ALIVE AND NOT TO LIVE, TO BE BURIED AMID A GAPING, STONY-EYED, ABYSMAL HUSH. HE KNEW THE TERROR OF THOUGHT, OF MEMORY, OF REMORSE

be drawn back again? Was not that small white hand strong enough?

Northward before a steady blow, northward, steering by the wind, close-hauled until every rope sang its own song! Northward out of the golden haze, out of the still, white nights! Northward until the lashing

spray stung as it hit the face! Away—away! Rushing from gleam into gloom! The business on in earnest; the year's work ahead! Away in the wind's eye to the haunts of the mammoth bowhead whale!

The crew worked without spirit, bringing down upon themselves curses and truc-

ulence. A rope was snarled; a fist landed heavily. Rain chilled to the bone and weighted the canvas so that it spilled the wind and boomed hollowly. Scouse had a taste that would not leave the mouth. There was fog and there was sickness.

Kerndon took his trick at the wheel in a blinding storm amid mountains of dark-green water. The night came down like a swift pall. Steering by the wind, he could only dimly see the great sail above his head that was his only guide. The unnatural roar filled his ears. The wheel tore left and right in his grasp, a thing alive, and furious at his restraining hand. Out there, incased in oilskins, stood the captain, peering into the unknown and unseeable.

Kerndon's eyes, uplifted, seemed the eyes of a man in prayer. The great white sail he saw as a spirit leading him. High above the spume it rode, it flew. His aching sight pictured it fantastically. It was a spirit of power, of fearless pride—no, a serene angel of life that pulled him whither it would—now down—down—down, now up—up—up! The habit of dreaming had grown apace. Kerndon, cold, wet, muscle-weary, watched it change form, dip, sway—heard its many voices, the song of the vibrating cordage. Then in his overwrought condition he felt this spirit of life flutter from its supreme place and touch him with a light contact of blessing, lying along his arm white and soft and caressing—a

sail shouted at him. The vessel's bows paid off; he brought them back, wrenching himself cruelly. Too late! A towering sea hung above the ship—twenty feet—dark, impending, horrible! In its descent it swept the forward deck like an avalanche, sounding its thunder above the scream of the savage wind. One moment the captain stood peering ahead; the next he was gone—gone in a wallow of grinding waters.

They picked him out of the scuppers, unconscious and bleeding. His right arm was broken. Kerndon, clinging to the wheel, saw it all, and gritted his teeth and went sick. He knew what was coming! Before ever the mate's huge bulk loomed



THE COQUETTISH GIRL OF THE WHITE TEETH SEWED A WATER-PROOF PARKA FOR HIM AND PRESENTED IT WITH MANY SLY GLANCES AND GIGGLED LAUGHTER

human hand, the hand of trust and more than trust.

So real was that hand that he put up his own to feel it there, and instantly the demon wheel spun half over, flinging him crashing. Gasping, he was up and wrestling for supremacy. "Boom!" the great

in the dark doorway behind him, he knew. He could see nothing at his back; he could hear nothing for the roar; he could only feel—and the brute blow, landing on his neck behind his right ear, went through him like a hot iron. He fell. Over him and upon the wheel sprang the mate.

Nor did his punishment end there. Day after day it pursued him, as it can pursue only on shipboard in the middle of the ocean. He was not allowed to forget; his error hounded him. And eight months of the year remained to be lived.

Through the straits into Bering Sea went the Anscome, all ice-hung from the freezing spray, a frosted glittering huntress of the sea. Her captain, his arm in a sling, bullied the crew and heaped his ire upon Kerndon.

"Aloft, and reef that royal!" he bawled at him as a squall showed in the sky.

Kerndon, scanning the treacherous, glazed shrouds, knew whom he meant.

But Tom Kerndon was strong, strong with fighting purpose. Where there was no escape he asked for no quarter; only his pride told him with certainty that he would not stay to receive from this unjust, treacherous man the miserable reward for a year of terrible labor—the law's requirement, the big iron dollar.

"I'll obey your orders, sir," he said without quailing, "but I'll never go back with you. You can't keep me. There are ways of beating that!"

Amazed, astounded at such presumption, the captain's face grew inflamed.

"You go with me—don't think otherwise! No tricks, you infernal sea-lawyer! Maybe you're thinking of deserting."

Kerndon, fastening the captain with his determined gaze, saw the sardonic satisfaction that went with this; but it meant nothing to him. A chance must develop. They would have to put in to land. There were no sharks in Alaskan waters.

IV

THE chance came soon. Skins were needed to clothe the men. The ship put in at an Eskimo settlement and anchored within hailing distance of the shore. The Eskimos came out in their kaiaks to trade.

Kerndon stood at the rail and viewed the prospect of freedom. Here was shelter of a sort, and an excellent chance of escape. These crude barbarians with their greasy faces and pig eyes, their swarthy Mongolian cast of countenance and their lack of intelligence, had the aspect of genuine friendliness. He observed a lack of fear—indeed, a sort of broad enjoyment—ringing him round.

A young girl stood upon the deck, ogling with her eyes and laughing all over her body.

She looked anything but displeased at the advent of these strangers. The men were quite at home. One of them even managed to make himself understood in a queer sort of garbled patois. The thought in Kerndon's mind was that ships put in at this place with fair frequency. Let him but reach shore and hide from searching parties, and this nightmare would be over. He would reshuffle for good wages on some vessel short-handed from encounters with ill-fortune.

He made his plans with care. From shore to ship, from ship to shore, these yellow-brown people came and went. The utmost freedom was theirs. They received the wretched food of the forecabin, grunted their enjoyment of the hardtack, and, being caught by sleepiness, stretched themselves upon deck. There was no real night, but just a dim twilight that lasted for an hour or two. The women were busy making garments for the men—garments of walrus hide, of bearskin.

Kerndon saw to it that a set of fur garments was made for him. By no word or action did he give an inkling of his purpose. When he saw two of the men leaning at the rail and heard them discussing whether or not a man could make his way down the coast; when he saw the yearning in their eyes and the pessimism that made them shake their heads, he moved away so as not to be considered of them. He could have laughed aloud at their stupidity. He would soon be free!

It was when the twilight cast a weird, supernatural glow over the sea and the land that Kerndon ceased to wait. He felt he could wait no longer. The captain had been giving him undue attention, as if reading his mind. The sardonic look in that hard face warned him, infuriated him.

In the ghostly half light he pulled his hood over his face, and, attaching himself to a small party of Eskimos who were leaving, dropped over the side with them, and paddled ashore unnoticed.

His heart was in his mouth every foot of the way. Even on shore he dared not turn his head; but when the natives crawled into their igloos, he went right on and hastily passed the village. The hills cropped out a few miles from the shore; he had made these his goal, his temporary hiding-place, his short-time shelter.

They were poor hills, whether for hiding-place or for shelter. The bleak stretches

pointed on and on, in shame and inhospitality—rock and tundra, the latter showing vagrant patches of coarse grass that no animal could have consumed, the former bare and leafless and bald. Away to the eastward at a great distance stood a ragged line of spruce-trees; somewhat nearer squatted two or three undernourished dwarf oaks that follow the earth around. Never anywhere the most casual protection. Nature had hidden nothing—and displayed little more. The country was a vast waste.

Kerndon dropped down where he could look back over a rise. The Anscome rode lightly on the surf, too far distant to distinguish figures aboard her—a painting after Corot in a ghastly ochereous light, a painting that moved. Kerndon cursed it and straightway fell to thinking of the town he had left, of the free coming and going of people not under orders, of girls—of a girl!

Three hours, and the day all bright around him, the sunlight glinting on the sea! His absence would be noted by now. They would put off a boat presently. He must be cunning then; if need be, make to that distant line of dark, blue-green trees.

Five hours—six—seven. His eyes hurt from the protracted, expectant gazing; he rested them on objects nearer at hand. When he looked again, the spanker was set; canvas fluttered out on the jib. The whaler came slowly about, and he fancied he heard the rattle and groan of the anchor-chains. Small boats put off from her, but not ship's boats. The Anscome crept out to sea.

Kerndon came out of the hills warily. This departure might be a bait, a lure. With his eyes upon the vessel coasting down the wind, he drew near the village.

The first to see him was the round-faced girl. She seemed on the point of fleeing, but only on the point. As he came closer she showed her teeth, splendidly white, in coquettish welcome. He greeted her; whereupon she uttered a guttural reply and ran ahead to tell the others.

Soon they were gathered about him, stoical or wondering. The strutting possessor of the patois gibbered a question only half intelligible, and to him Kerndon stated why he was there, adding that he awaited another ship.

When this was rendered into the tongue of the village, a number of mouths began to jabber all at once. Considerable laughter

accompanied the jabbering; it was giggling laughter, very foolish to hear. Evidently they joked easily, these people.

He surmised from the incompetent interpreter's impossible English that the Anscome would not return. When he nodded and said "Good!" they looked pleased.

His weariness and lack of sleep gained ready response of hospitality. He was invited into an igloo. Crawling on all fours, he found the interior well lined with skins, but even more fetid than the forecabin of the Anscome. He lay down and slept without one inner protest.

When he awakened, he saw a ring of squatting natives busily eating. They beckoned to him and offered food—raw meat, partly frozen, and a chunk of blubber. The meat he kept until he could build a fire; the blubber he made a pretense of eating, although the taste of it well-nigh choked him. The little circle chewed lustily, tearing like wild animals at the pieces of raw seal meat.

Kerndon looked for the appearance of another ship within a few days, and therefore could afford to treat this experience as a passing jest, to be retold at home with embellishments. When no ship was sighted in a fortnight, he began to grow uneasy. Hunger assailed him; he had an inordinate desire for bread, the coarse, bitter bread of the Anscome's diet. Even hardtack he could have enjoyed.

Then out of the silent sea rose a sail. He watched it, fearful every instant to see a change of course; but it bore straight for the land, growing larger and larger. When it hove to in plain sight of the settlement he was in a kaiak, paddling out with all his strength, his heart singing.

Grasping a rope, he clambered over the side and called a greeting. The effect was electrical. Swarming from everywhere, the crew banged and thumped him on the back and plied him with questions. The Anscome? Anybody knew better than to sign on the Anscome! They were whaling, too—had just taken their fourth whale.

They stepped aside to admit the captain, a jolly-looking fellow. He inspected Kerndon thoughtfully and pursed his lips.

"Deserter?" he snapped out laconically.

The word sounded dark on those lips. The men shifted their glances. Kerndon bit his lips and tried to smile.

"I suppose you'd call it that," he answered. "I couldn't stand it, sir."

"Then you couldn't stand it here, either."

Swinging on his heel, the master strode off, leaving him blinking his eyes uncomprehendingly. He followed.

Kerndon, smarting and angry, took himself off the ship. In two days the ship sailed away, and he laughed grimly to see it go.

"Thank God, I didn't take on an-



THE STORY HE HAD CONCOCTED IN THE SOLITARY HOURS BURST INTO EXPRESSION WITH THE SINCERITY OF AN OVERWHELMING NEED

other bully, anyway," he muttered. And therewith he set himself patiently to await better chances.

A month passed. It was summer and at times too warm for skin clothing.

Kerndon went with the men on their fishing expeditions in the umiak, clad in a water-proof parka made of seal-gut that the coquettish girl of the white teeth had sewed for him and presented with many sly glances and giggled laughter. He was glad of the fish; it was a blessed change to eat fish. He cooked them over his blubber-lamp as best he could, and the girl came and watched him with interest.

V

At the end of a month the weather changed with great suddenness. A cold wind penetrated Kerndon's light skin garments, and he bargained with the native belle for more clothes of fur. He himself

"Beg pardon, sir," he began again. The captain whirled upon him and listened in stern displeasure. "We were promised a lay. We found out we would get a dollar. We were to be cheated, sir. If you'll let me work my way—"

"You don't look like a dunce, my man," spoke the captain. "When I say that I want no deserter aboard my vessel, I think you understand me. Good day!"

helped to cure the skins and rub them into pliancy, keeping one eye out for a passing vessel.

When the month had passed in vain, and a dread fear entered his heart that the winter would find him shut off from rescue, he toiled long hours constructing an igloo of whale-bones and puncheons set close and plastered with mud. He worked with no other object than to keep his mind employed; but no activities of the hand could do that.

Often he paused in his work and stared out to sea with fright in his eyes, for no ship came. And soon ice-floes floated by in ever thicker fields. Their grinding was a disturbing voice in his sleep. The significance of their presence haunted him.

A little later there came the white silence—terrible, sublime, merciless; and with the advent of the white silence he looked out to sea no more.

His imprisonment was unlike the imprisonment of the Anscome. On the Anscome men spoke, cursed, sang, laughed; and, around them, the sea churned in perpetual motion, responding to the badgering shout of the wind. He had thought the comradeship of foremast-hands disgusting, and that of the captain and mates tyranny; and all the time these things had been a wondrous boon—*life!*

He knew now what it was to be alive and not to live, to be buried amid a gaping, stony-eyed, abysmal hush. He knew the terror of thought, of memory, of remorse. All these united to clutch him by the throat with moist, feverish talons; while outside wafted the thud of flying snow and the moan of the icy wind.

He must have gone mad, indeed, had it not been for the incomprehensible satisfaction of the simple creatures with whom he was walled in. For hours he sat in their igloos, understanding nothing of what they said and caring no more, dumb with awe at their placid acceptance of this hideous existence, steadying himself in the wonder of creation that produced in this intolerable isolation the happiness—it seemed no less—of childish indulgence, games, song, mimicry.

Then he would crawl back to his own round dwelling, where the moss wick spluttered and smoked in the cake of blubber, giving forth a ghostly, phantom light and a stench that he could not escape. Lying upon his face, he would wrench his very

heart with the agony of revolt, until the strain wore him out and induced sleep; and even then he would spring wide-awake in a cold sweat because he had felt a touch of small white hands upon his arm.

Once he started up so, and in very truth the hand was there, light upon his sleeve, but of flesh and blood. He gasped and cleared his eyes, gripping that hand tensely. Into his face a pair of long, narrow, coquettish eyes looked in mute, docile adoration. It made him sick!

Haggard, frayed of nerves, wasted of flesh, he pictured himself back on the Anscome, the Anscome sailing in through the Golden Gate, with all the sailors cheering and waving their caps. He received his dollar with no word of protest. It was warm and sparkling, this air; this was California; less than three hundred miles farther south old friends awaited him. He had gone to see life—and he had seen it. What did it matter that he had made but a single dollar? It was enough; he was on the way home. *That* was life. Life was the home-coming, the joy of return.

Came the spring at length. His body felt it; his mind sensed it. Gaunt and subdued, he watched the ice-pack break with an echo of thunder, break and split and drift away. He lifted up his face to the sun—the *sun!* No longer was it a dancing rim of pale, fitful ghostliness; no longer did the dark keep him terrible company, mustering its banshee legions to flit along the firmament and to shoot like rockets to the zenith, spraying indescribable colors as savage and as unbodied as the spirits of a diseased mind.

And of a day over the sea came the first ship of the season. Kerndon's tongue babbled at sight of it, and he was down at the water's edge, waving his arms, while it was still miles in the offing. Standing up in his kaiak, he greeted it as the spirit of life, near to hysteria in the ecstatic joy of deliverance.

Scrambling over the rail, he felt the lift of the deck with a glad heart. Men stared in earnest. He hurried to the captain.

"A year in this white hell!" he cried. "God! It looks good to see a ship and men on it! In another month I'd have gone loco. You'll take me on?"

"How's this?" demanded the captain.

"How did you come here?"

"Wrecked—taken in the ice and

smashed." Kerndon had grown crafty. He flung out a thin arm. "The floe got around outside of us—caught us—"

The story he had carefully concocted in the solitary hours burst into expression with the sincerity of an overwhelming need. The captain paid it the tribute of close attention.

"And where are the others?" he asked. "You alone of so many? All dead—drowned? What ship was that?" Then, when Kerndon hesitated even so slightly, he roared out a laugh in his face. "I've heard of you, and I don't believe a word of your story. You're a deserter!"

Bright flames danced before Kerndon's eyes. He expostulated, white-lipped. He heard the words that peremptorily ordered him off the vessel, heard them distantly—in a fog.

On the beach the girl, Eelaiah, waited for him. Always she seemed waiting for him. Her round face lit at sight of him. One almost overlooked the flatness of her features in the smile of her white teeth; but Kerndon strode past her, straight to his dwelling, and shut himself inside.

For three days he was not seen; then Eelaiah, creeping silently, found him tossing in delirium. Night and day, with the tenderness of a mother, she nursed him. Nothing of his babbling could she understand, but for hours and hours she sat smiling blissfully while his excruciating clutch of her hand deadened and whitened the flesh.

When in time another vessel rode outside the surf, Kerndon, emaciated and wan, but full of a devouring purpose, hid beneath his parka hood and mingled with the natives who boarded her. He avoided the captain; he avoided the men. He stooped; he slunk; he found an open hatch, and, dropping into it, pressed his enervated body into an obscure corner.

There for two days he remained, panting with thirst and heat; and on the third day the mate, carrying a lantern, came upon him and jerked him out. They flung him roughly into a boat and rowed him ashore, so weak that he dropped where they unloaded him on the beach. Careless of the tide washing over him, he sat on the sands and stared at the ship; and Eelaiah crouched there beside him.

VI

WHEN two more white winters had come and gone, a United States patrol and inspection ship poked its cheery nose into the little bay. Its officers came ashore to visit the people, and were astonished to see a square-built hut with a door the full height of a man.

Within they came face to face with one of their own kind. His features were Caucasian, although his skin was bronzed by the ice-glare.

He greeted them decently but with reserve. His eyes held a questioning look in spite of the grim, stolid secretiveness of his lips.

It was impossible not to sense a tragedy. A white man living in this God-forsaken wilderness? The whimpering of a baby somewhere in the rear of the dwelling? They shook their heads and gave it up. Any man with pride to cast himself away in such barrenness and ignorance!

"Whisky," shrugged the younger officer when they had come out. "You can tell 'em. Did you notice him open his mouth and then check himself? Crazy for liquor! That burning light in his eyes—"

"Poor fellow! I'm afraid so," nodded the other. "At that I should have offered him a berth—passage home, you know—but I thought if he wanted to go back he'd say so. Oh, well—you strike all sorts of humanity in this world. It's life!"

IS NOT LOVE ENOUGH?

DEAR, is not love enough?
How foolish of the rose
To quarrel with the sun
By whose soft light it grows!

"Twould be a foolish rose
Who did the sun rebuff
Because of one dark day.
Dear, is not love enough?

Harry Kemp

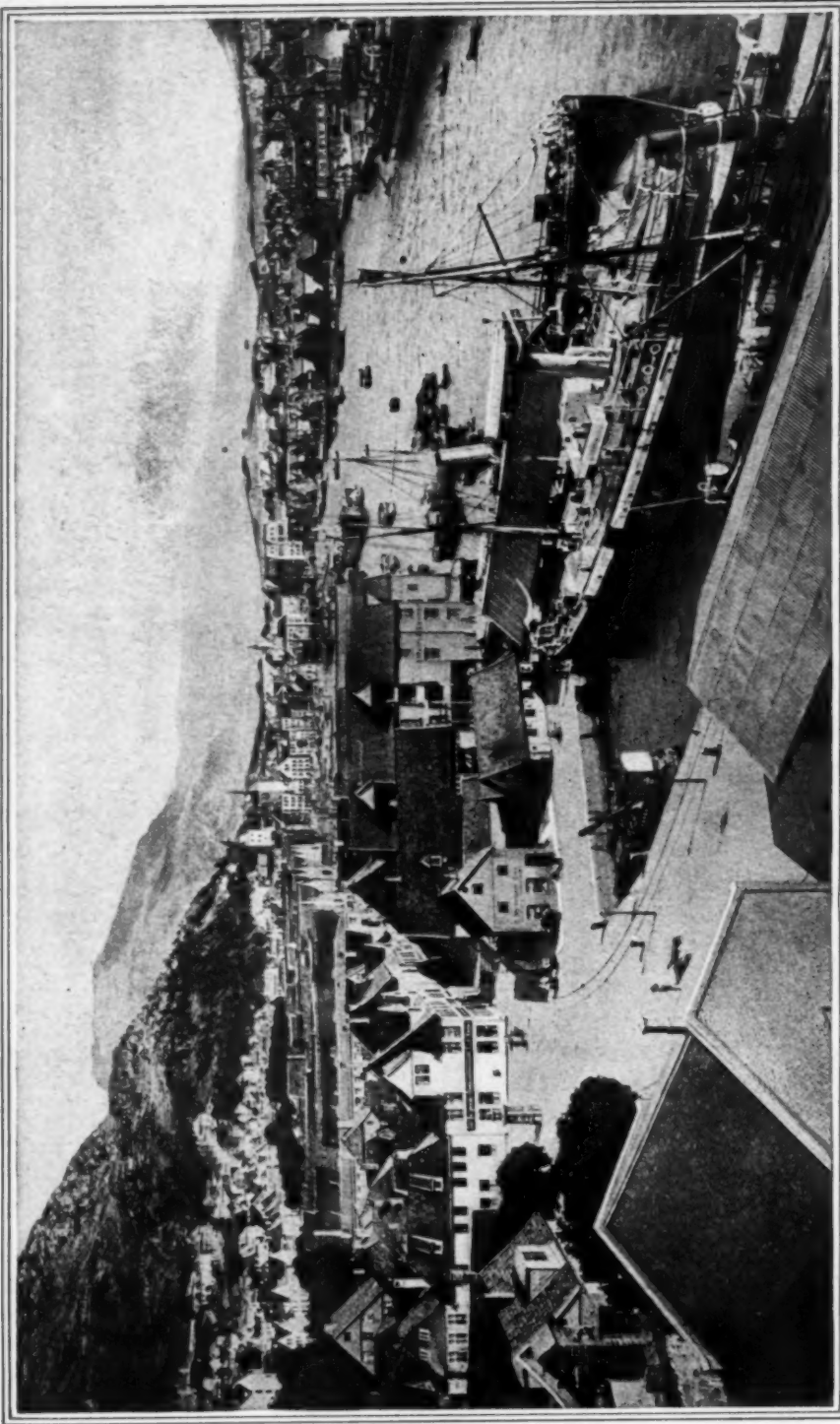
Seaports of the World

SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND MOST PICTURESQUE HARBORS TO WHICH
THE GREAT AND GROWING CURRENTS OF AMERICAN TRADE
ARE FLOWING ACROSS THE SEVEN SEAS

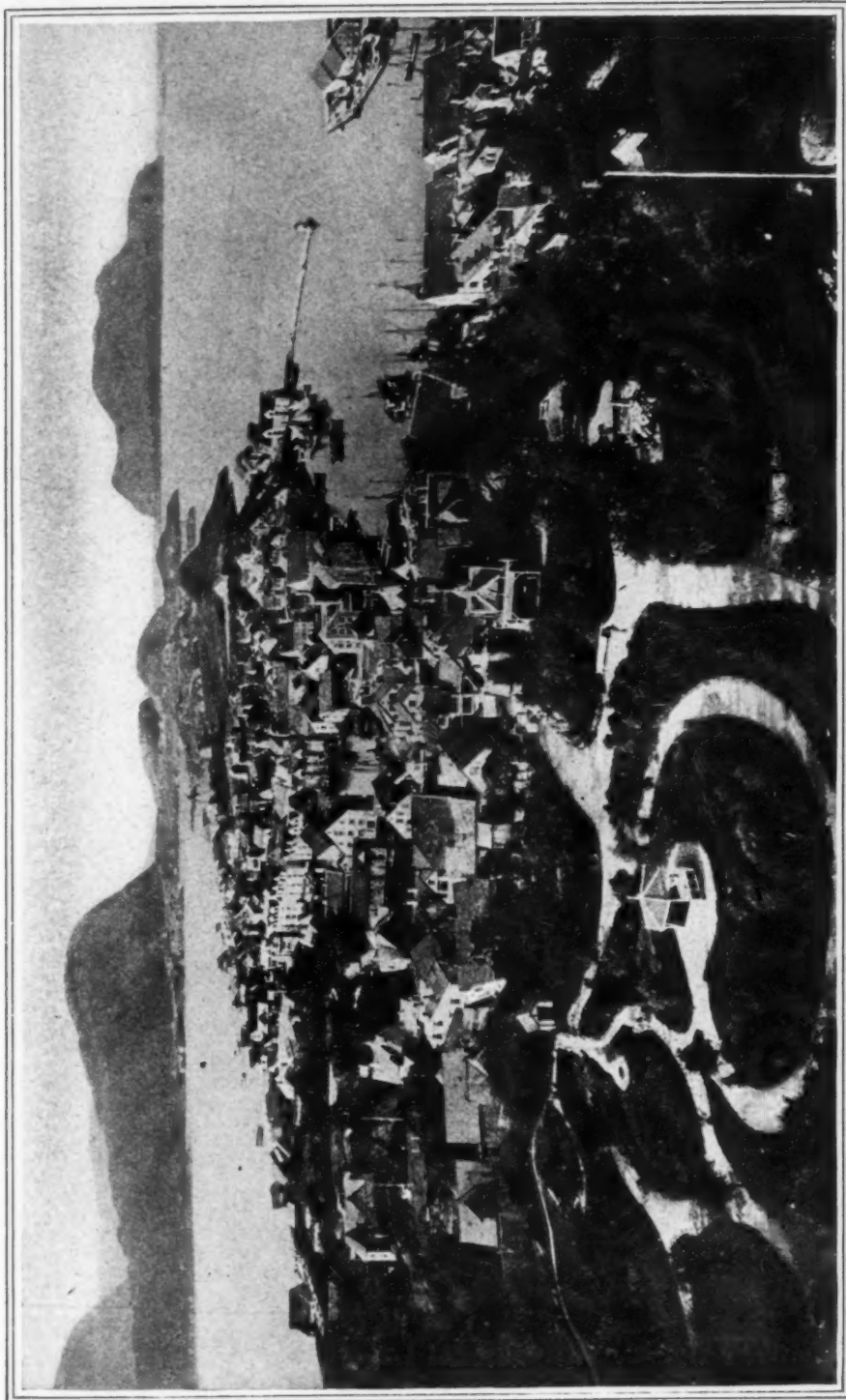
IT is already clear that a new era of world trade has opened with the conclusion of the world war, and that the United States is destined to play a much larger and more commanding part in international commerce than ever before. For the fiscal year preceding the war our total exports and imports of merchandise were just over four and one-quarter billions of dollars; in 1919 they were more than ten billions. There is no sign of any slackening of the vast stream of trade, for the demand for goods is world-wide and insistent. There has been a serious shortage of shipping, but owing to the rapid output of new vessels, chiefly from American yards, the total tonnage of the maritime nations is now larger than before the war. The world's commerce in 1920 is practically certain to be the greatest on record.



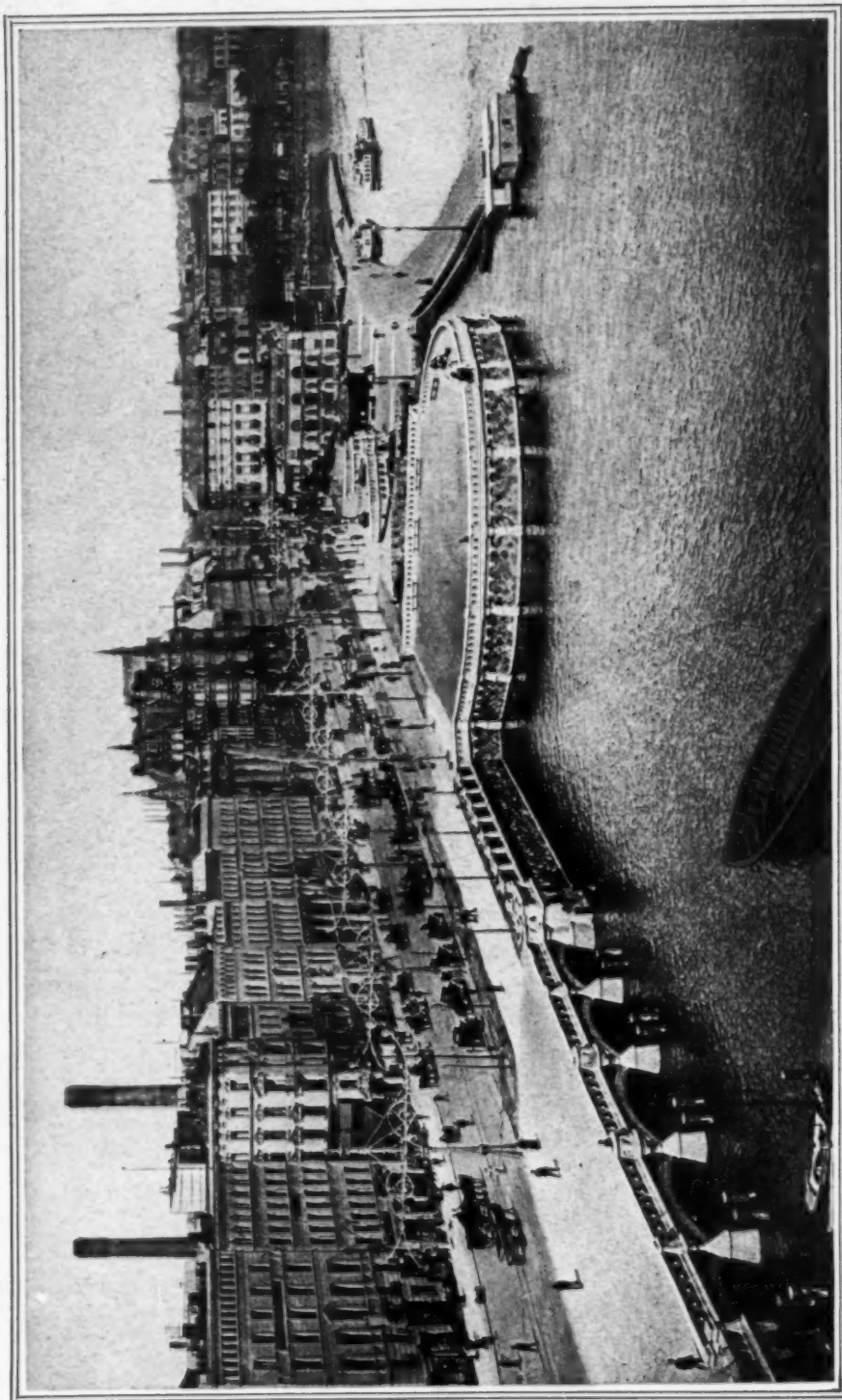
STOCKHOLM, THE CAPITAL AND CHIEF COMMERCIAL CENTER OF SWEDEN, A COUNTRY WITH WHICH THE UNITED STATES CARRIES ON A LARGE EXPORT TRADE IN FOODSTUFFS, COTTON, MACHINERY, AND TOOLS—THE CAPACIOUS HARBOR OF STOCKHOLM IS KEPT OPEN BY ICE-BREAKERS IN WINTER



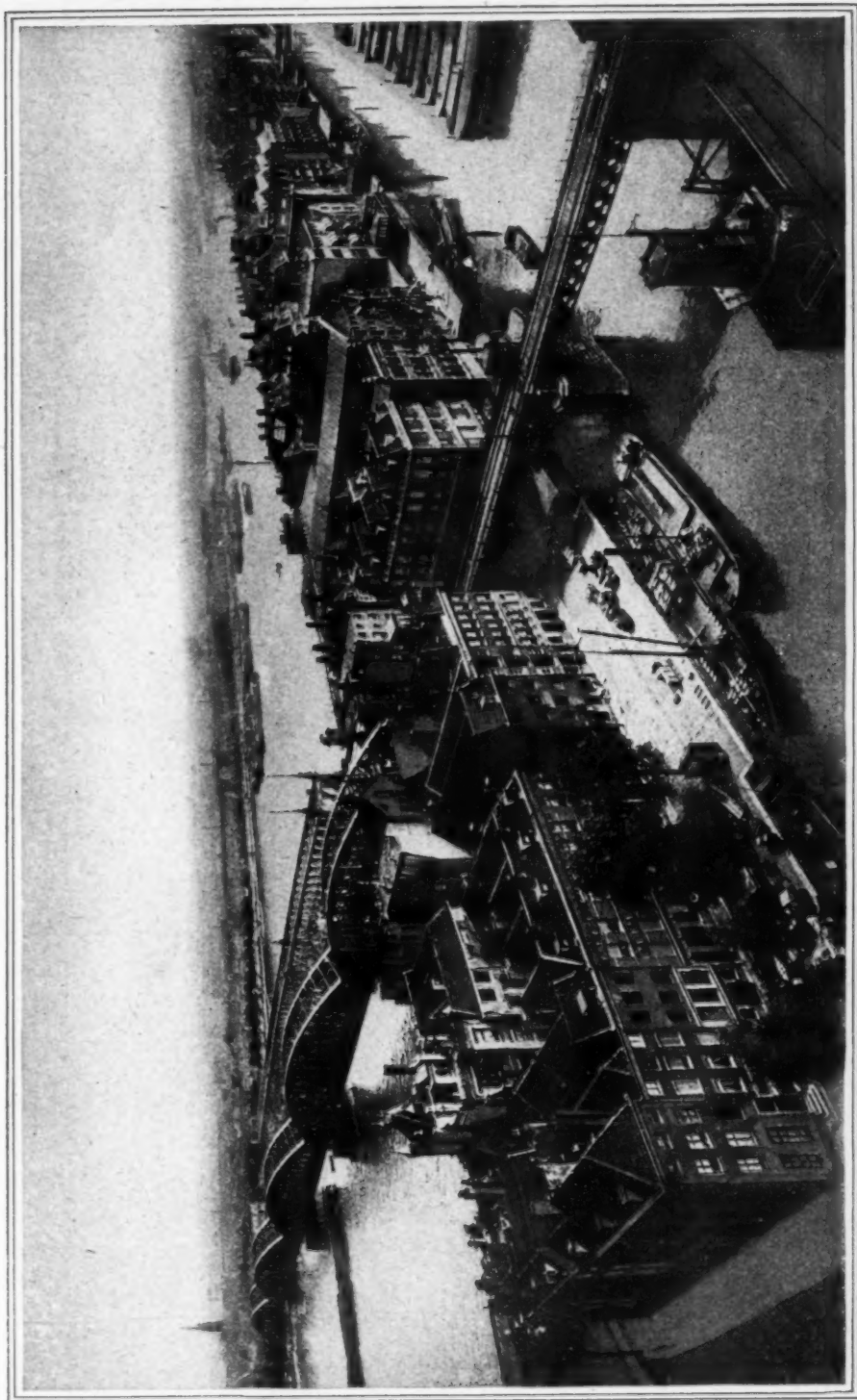
BERGEN, ONE OF THE TWO CHIEF SEAPORTS OF NORWAY, THE OTHER BEING CHRISTIANIA—THOUGH HER POPULATION IS LESS THAN TWO AND ONE-HALF MILLIONS, NORWAY HAS A MERCHANT FLEET EXCEEDED ONLY BY THOSE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES



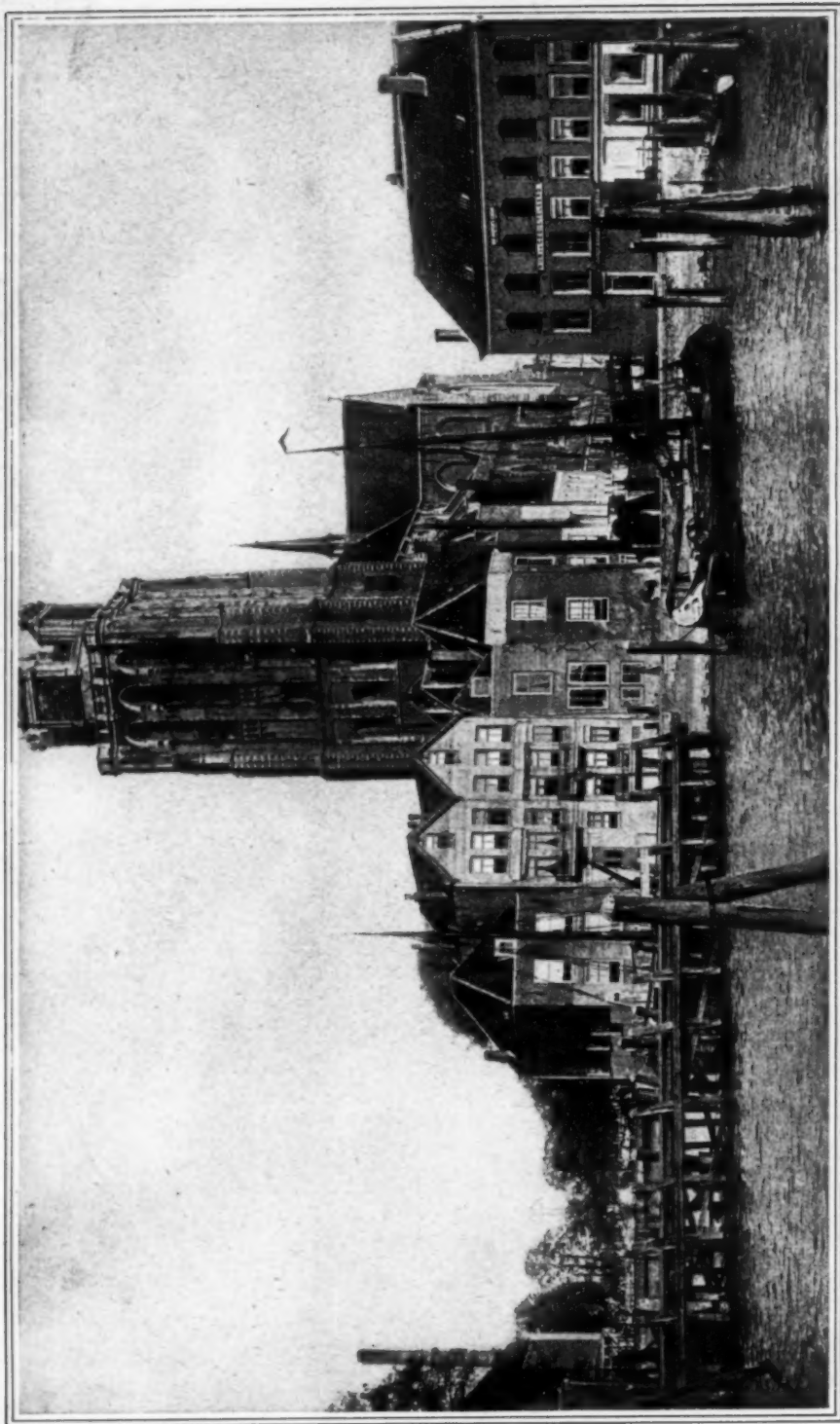
ALESUND, A PICTURESQUE FISHING PORT ON THE RUGGED AND DEEPLY INDENTED COAST OF NORWAY—FISH AND FISH PRODUCTS FORM NORWAY'S CHIEF ARTICLES OF EXPORT, AMOUNTING IN VALUE TO MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY



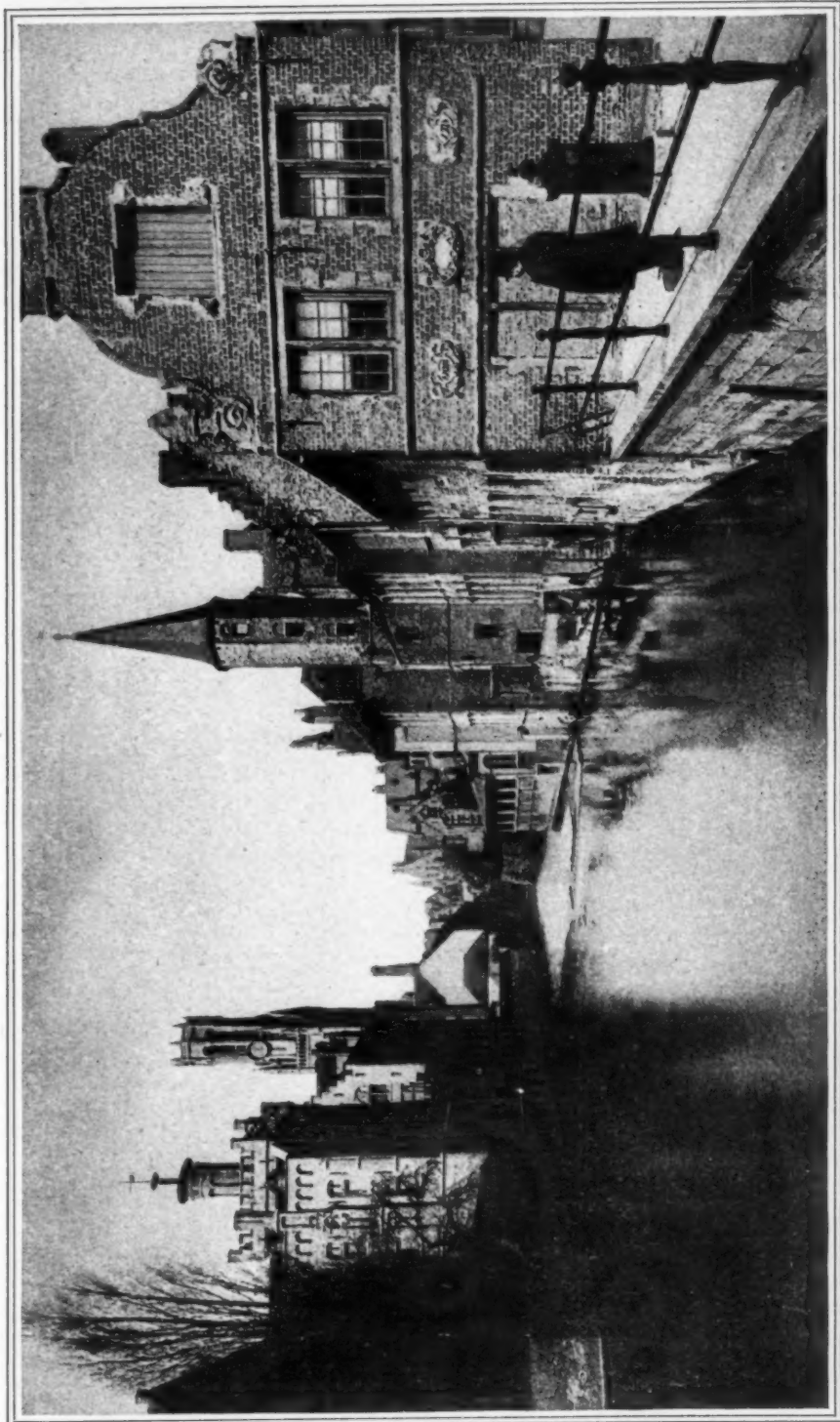
HAMBURG, THE GREAT GERMAN PORT ON THE RIVER ELBE, SEVENTY-FIVE MILES ABOVE ITS MOUTH—BEFORE THE WAR HAMBURG WAS THE CHIEF COMMERCIAL EMPORIUM OF NORTHERN EUROPE, AND ITS TRADE, THOUGH RUINED BY THE WAR, IS DESTINED TO REVIVE



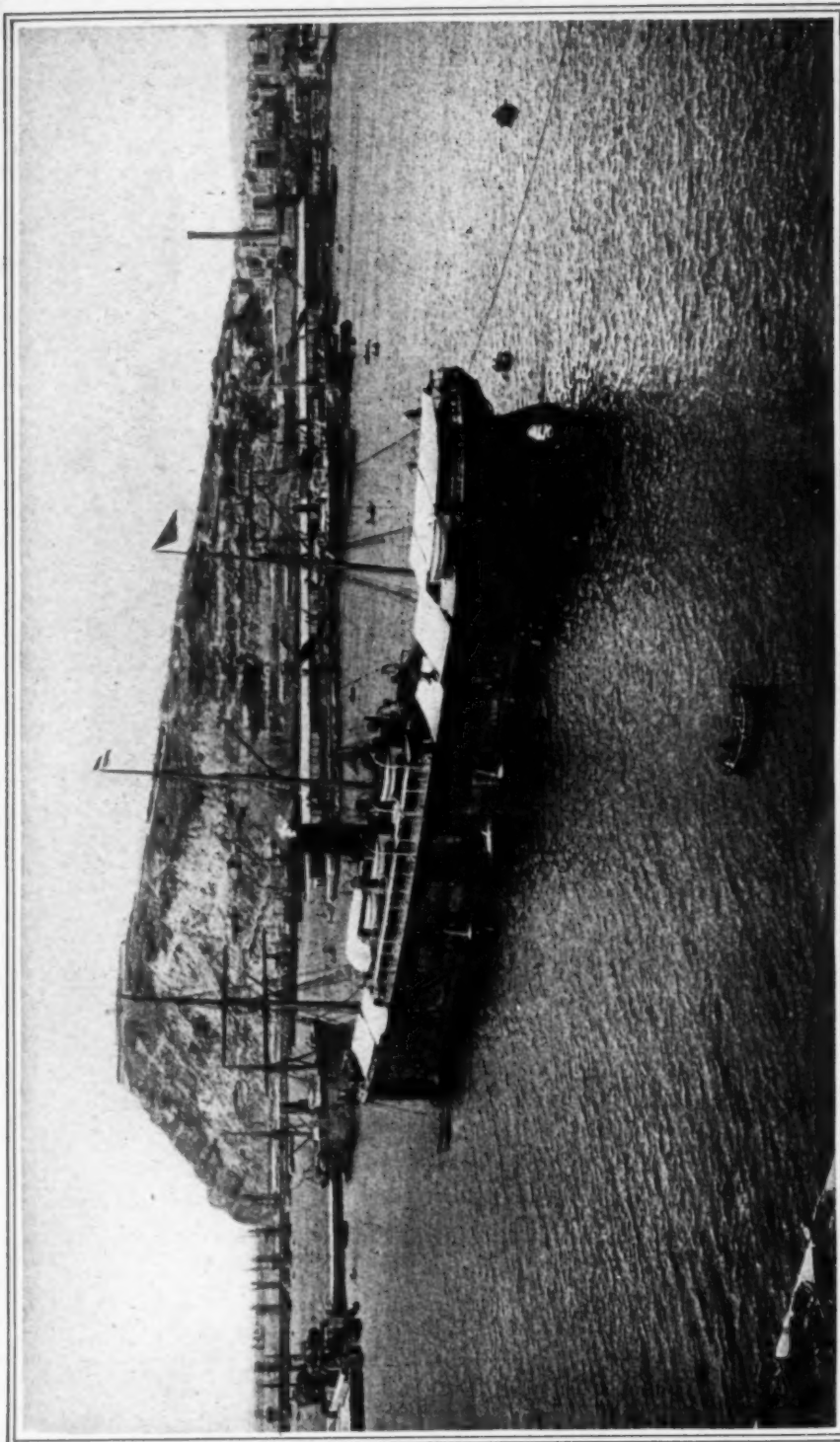
ROTTERDAM, THE CHIEF COMMERCIAL PORT OF HOLLAND—ROTTERDAM IS THE CENTER OF TRAFFIC FOR THE RIVERS RHINE AND MEUSE, AND DURING THE LAST THIRTY YEARS IT HAS BEEN DEVELOPED INTO ONE OF THE GREAT SEAPORTS OF THE WORLD



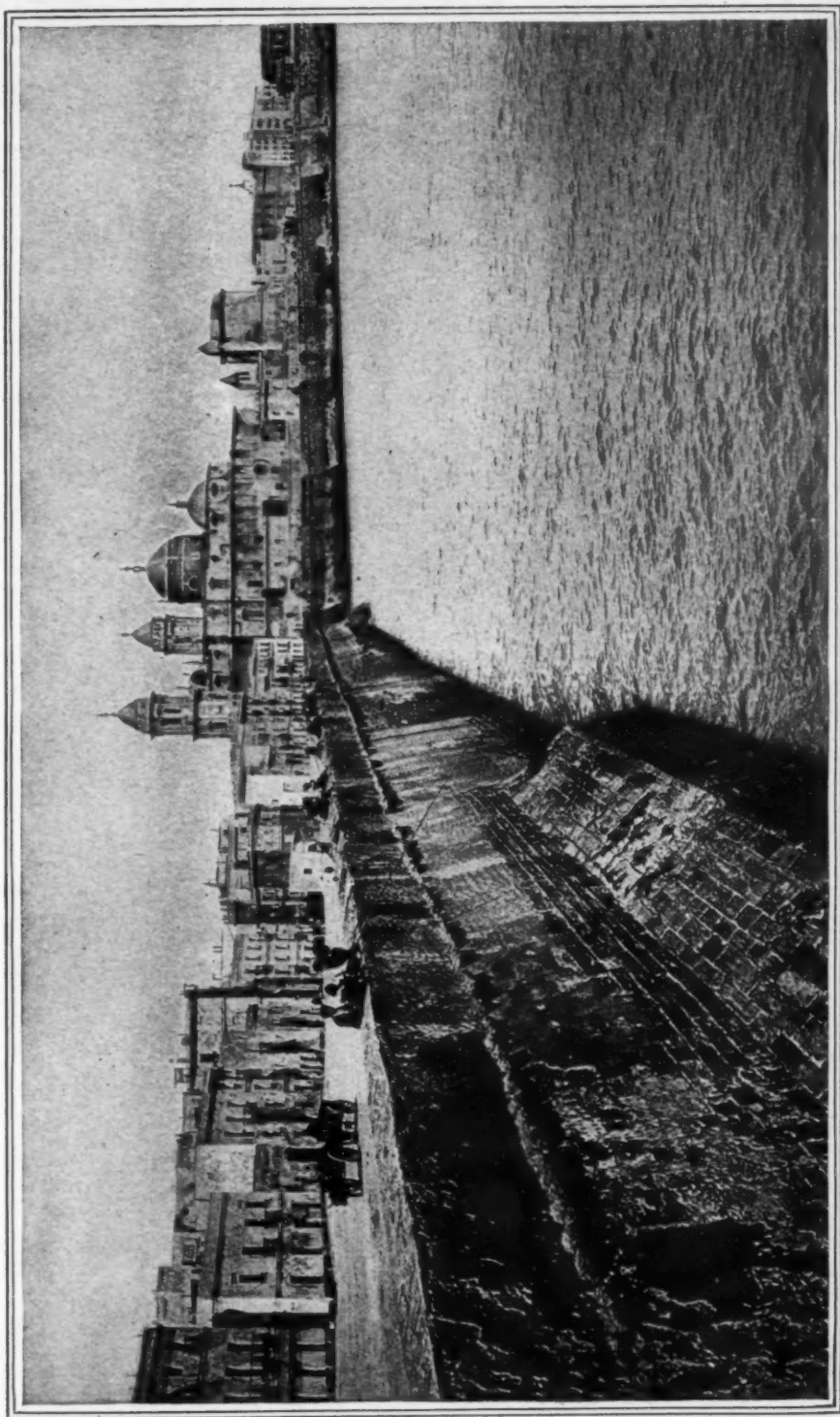
DORDRECHT, ONE OF THE PICTURESQUE MEDIEVAL TOWNS OF HOLLAND, AND DURING THE MIDDLE AGES THE CHIEF EMPORIUM OF DUTCH COMMERCE—IT IS STILL A PROSPEROUS SEAPORT, ITS HARBOR BEING FORMED BY THE RIVER MERWEDE, A BRANCH OF THE MEUSE



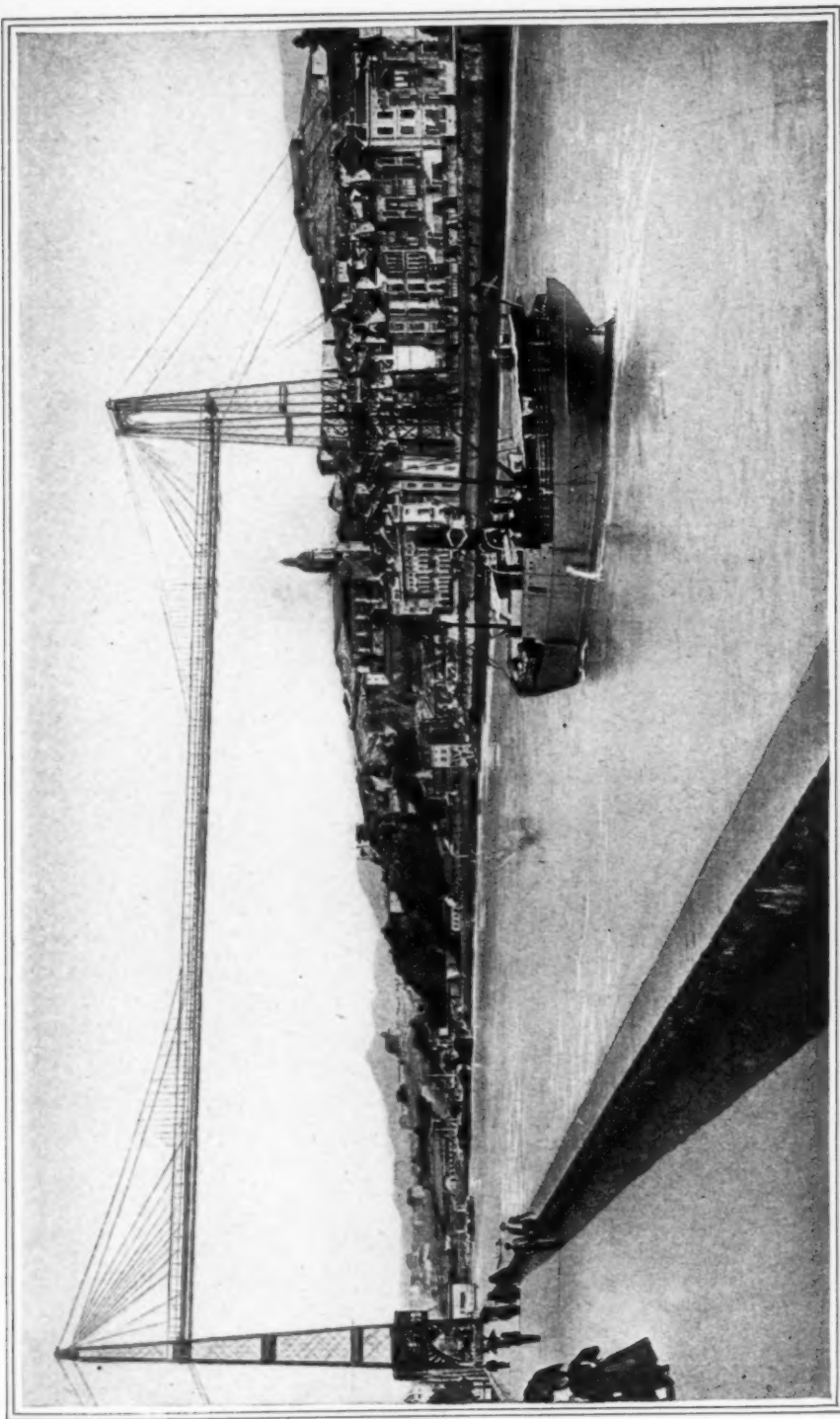
THE OLD BELGIAN CITY OF BRUGES, ONCE ONE OF THE LEADING PORTS OF NORTHERN EUROPE—IN RECENT YEARS IT HAS BEEN REOPENED TO MARITIME TRADE BY THE DEEP-WATER CANAL CONNECTING IT WITH ZEEBRUGGE, ON THE NORTH SEA



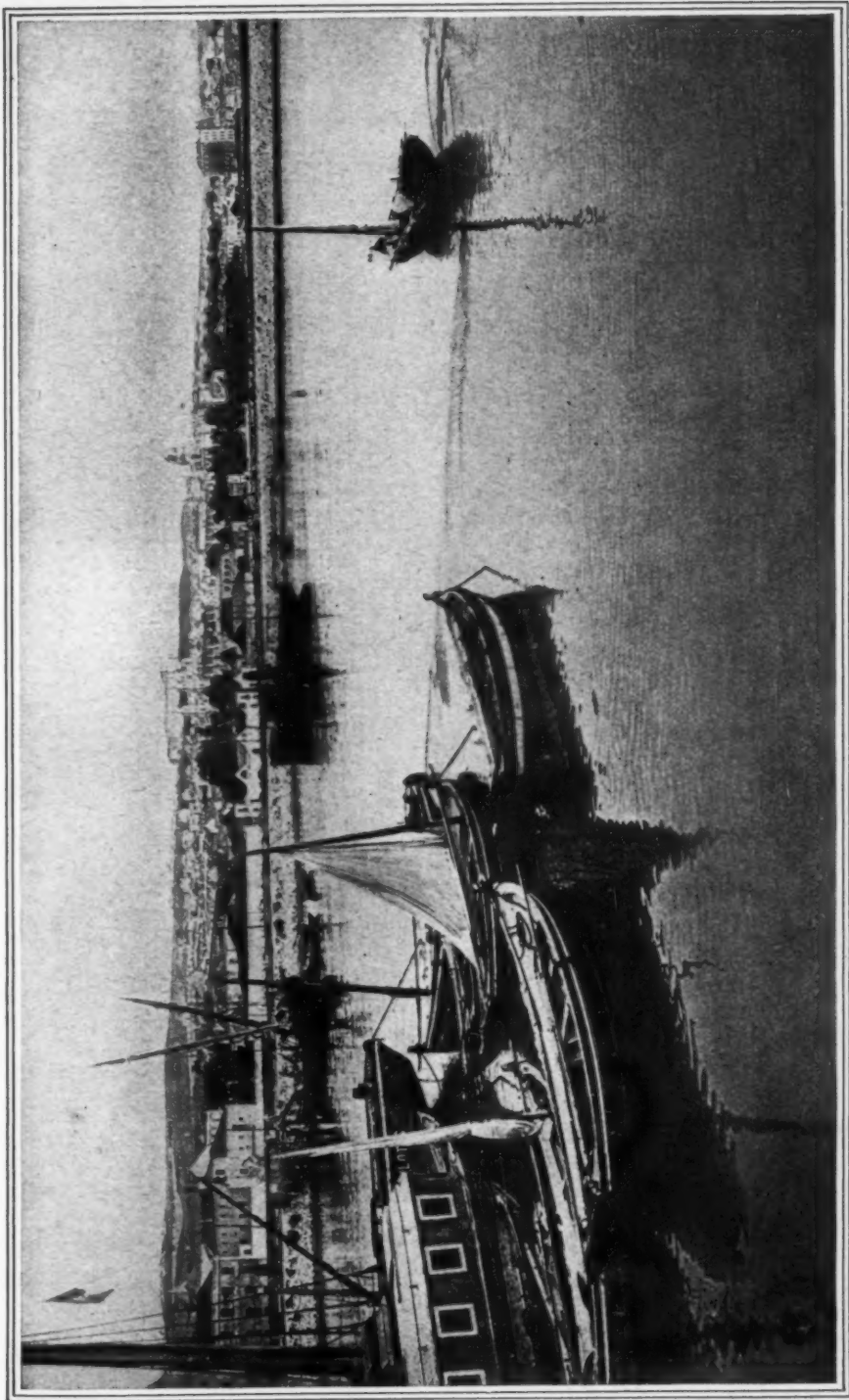
THE HARBOR OF BARCELONA, WITH THE HILL AND FORT OF MONTJUICH IN THE BACKGROUND—BARCELONA IS THE CHIEF SEAPORT AND COMMERCIAL CENTER OF SPAIN, AND IT HAS SHARED IN THE COUNTRY'S MARKED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DURING THE WAR



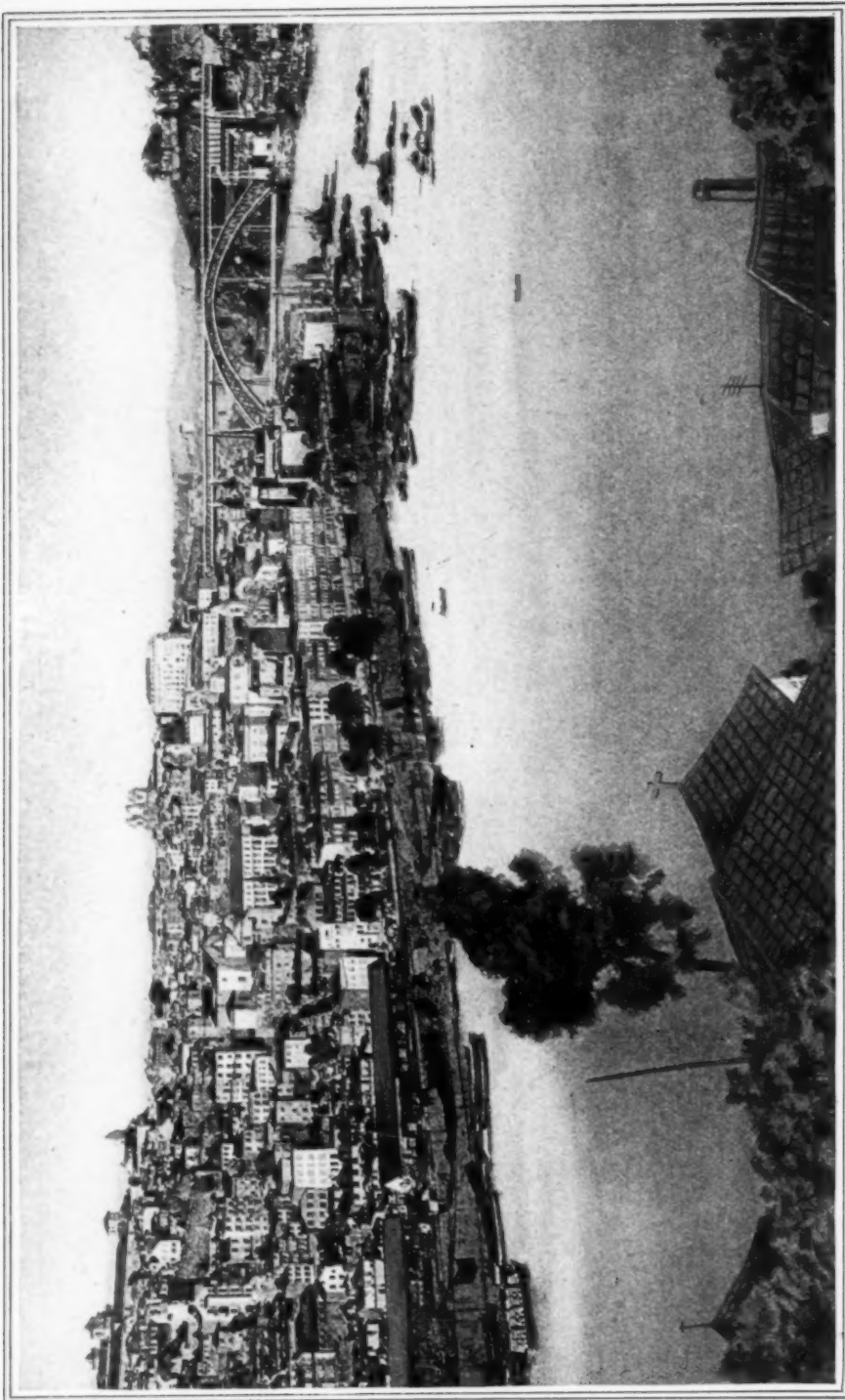
CADIZ, AN ANCIENT SPANISH SEAPORT OF ROMANTIC TRADITIONS—FOUNDED BY THE PHENICIANS THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, CADIZ GREW RICH AS THE HARBOR TO WHICH THE SPANISH GALLEONS BROUGHT THEIR TREASURE CARGOES—IT HAS RECENTLY BEEN MADE A FREE PORT



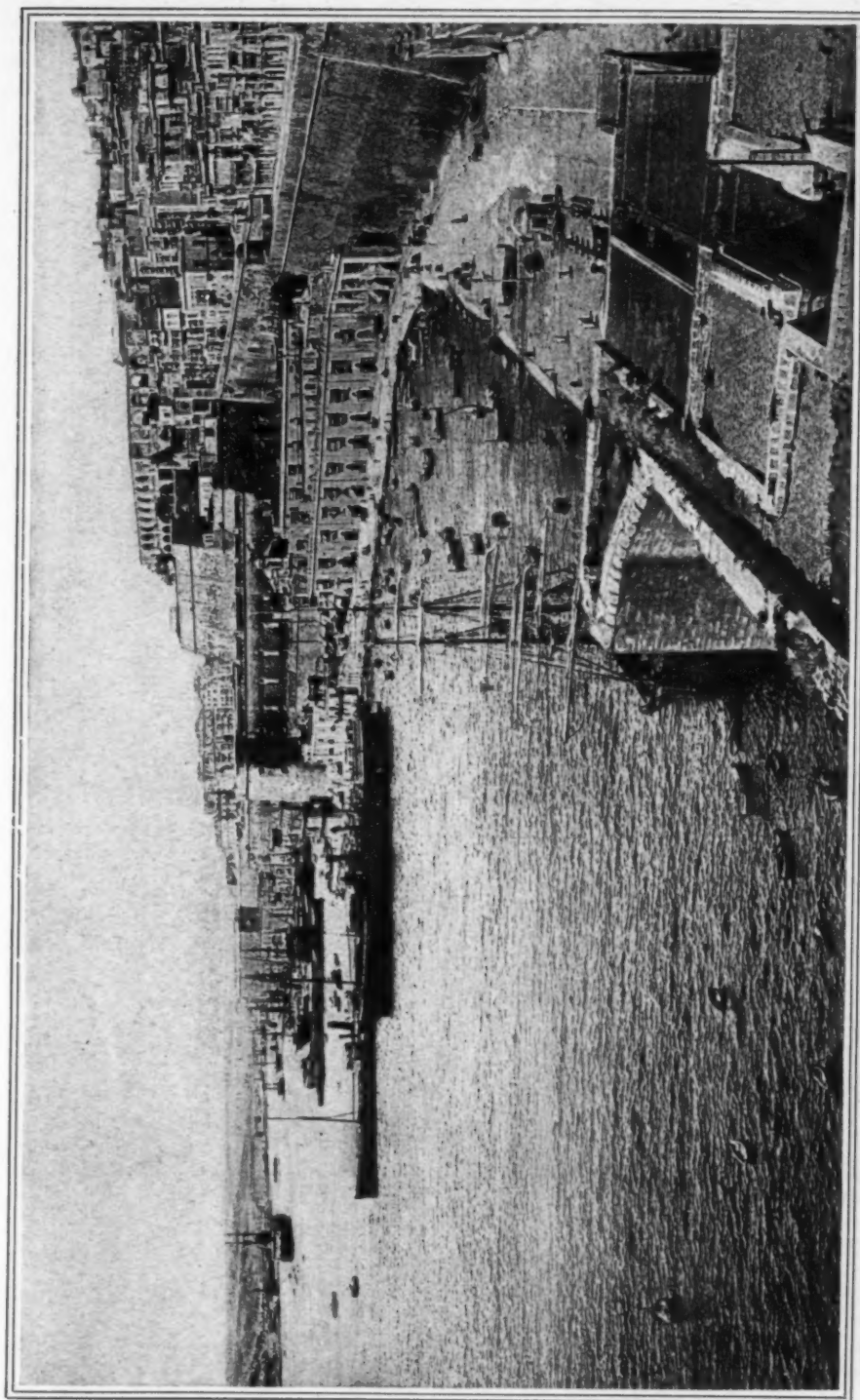
PORTUGALETE AND THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER NERVION, THE ENTRANCE TO THE PORT OF BILBAO, EIGHT MILES UP THE RIVER—BILBAO IS ONE OF THE LEADING SEAPORTS OF SPAIN, HAVING A LARGE EXPORT TRADE IN IRON ORE



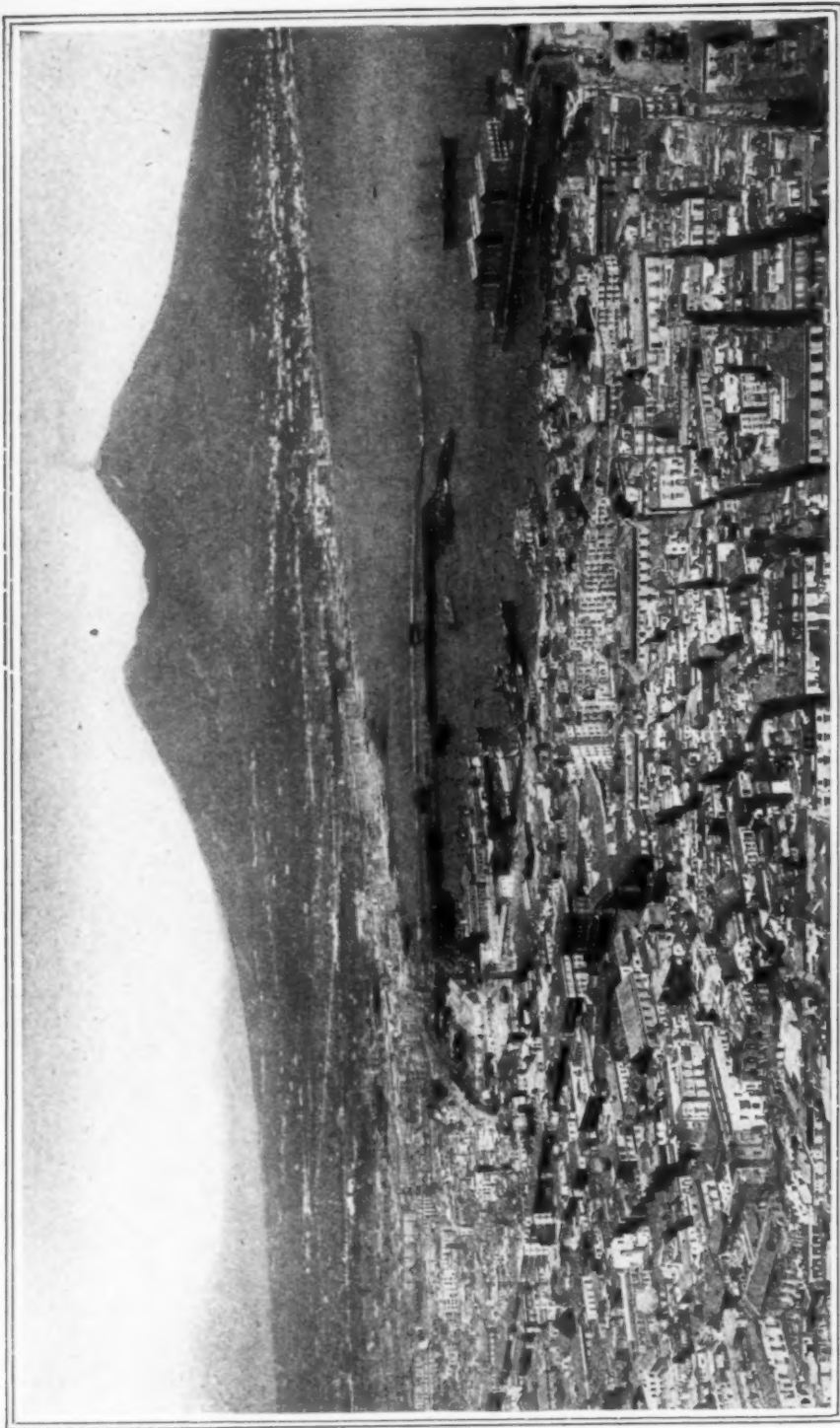
THE PORT OF LISBON, WITH THE SUBURB OF BELEM IN THE BACKGROUND—LISBON IS THE CAPITAL AND CHIEF COMMERCIAL CITY OF PORTUGAL, AND THE WIDE ESTUARY OF THE RIVER TAGUS GIVES IT A FINE DEEP-WATER HARBOR



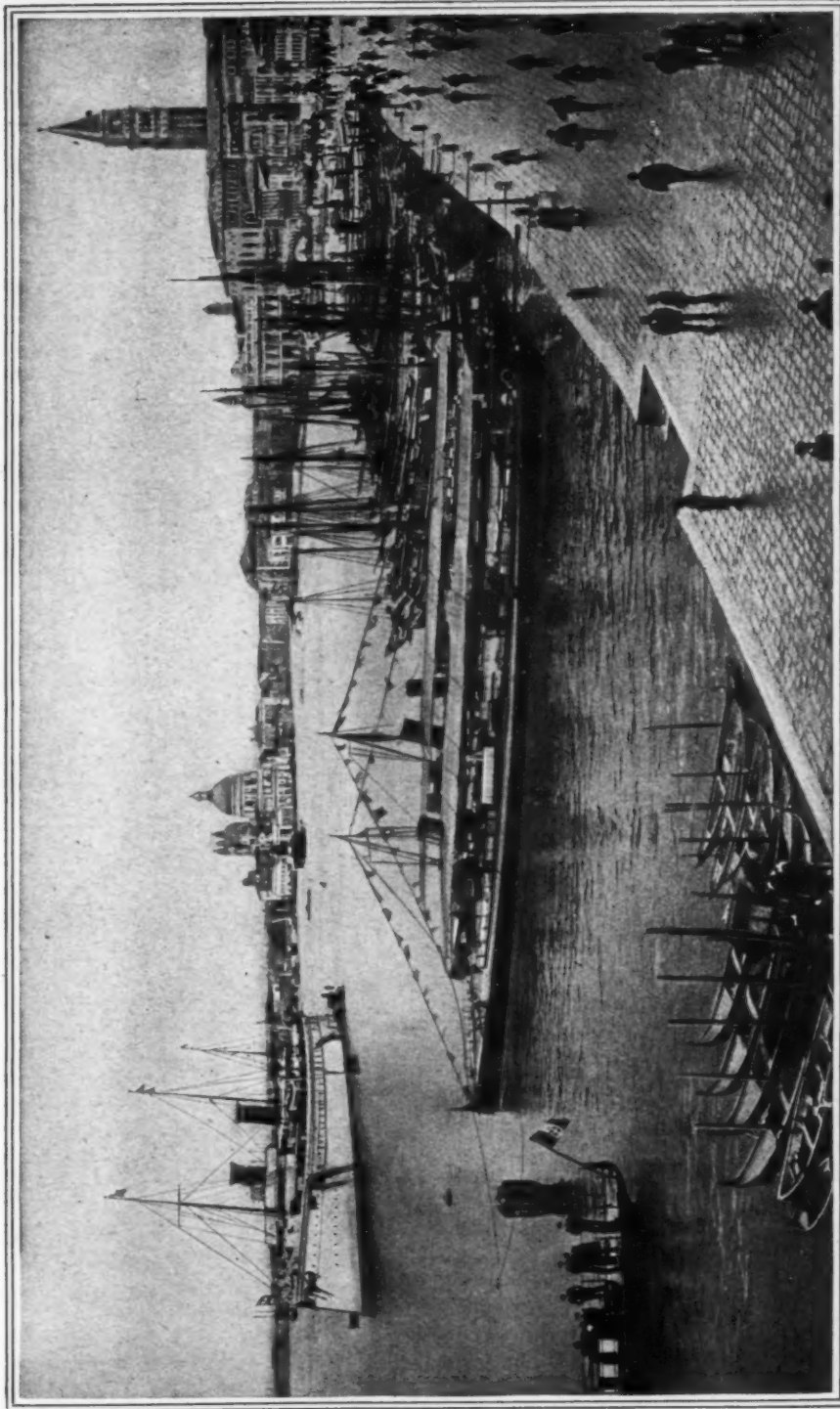
THE CITY OF OPORTO, WITH THE BRIDGE OF LOUIS I OVER THE RIVER DOURO—OPORTO, WHOSE NAME MEANS "THE HARBOR," IS THE SECOND CITY AND SEAPORT OF PORTUGAL, AND IS FAMOUS FOR ITS EXPORT TRADE IN PORT WINE



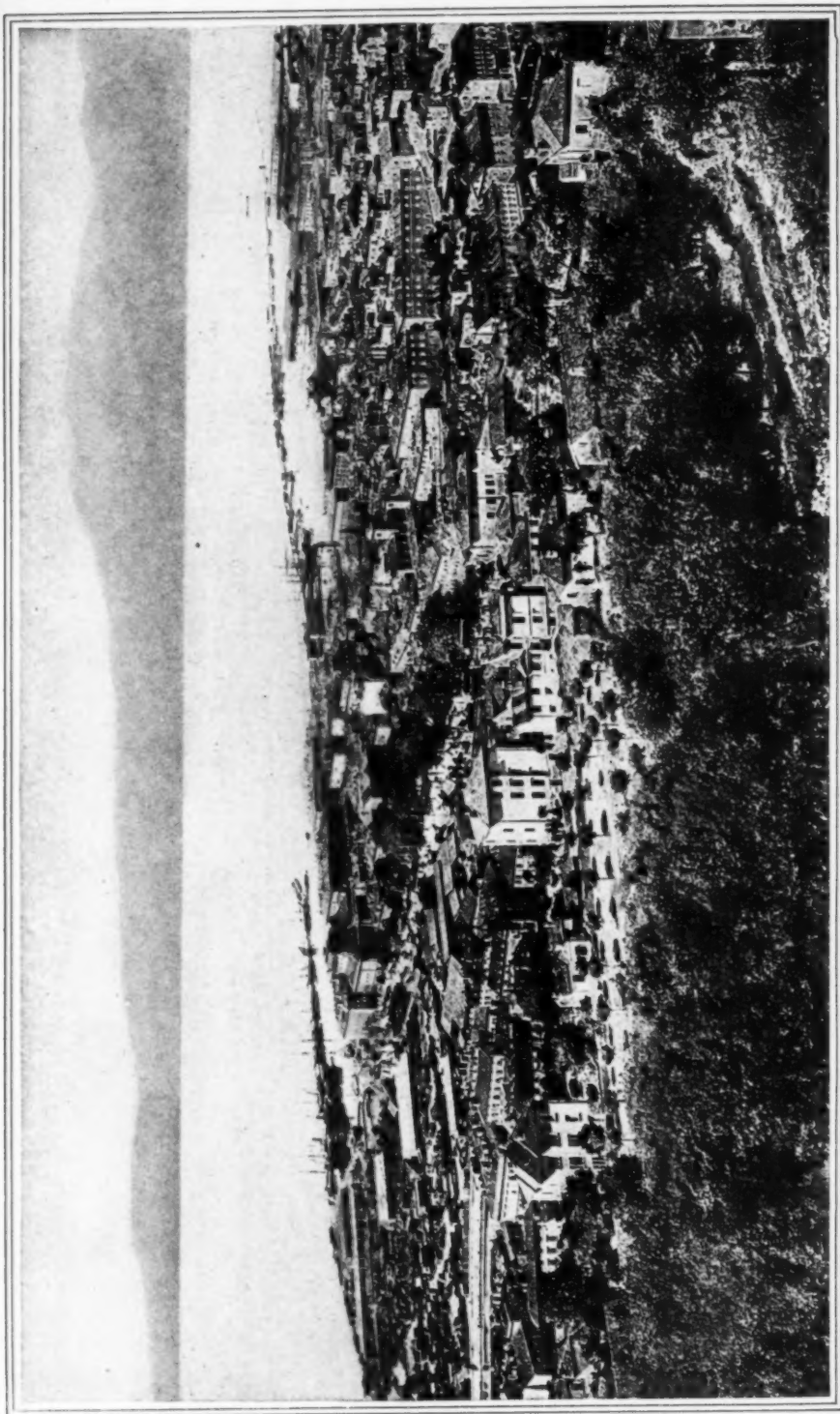
THE HARBOR OF VALETTA, THE CAPITAL AND CHIEF TOWN OF THE ISLAND OF MALTA—MALTA'S CHIEF IMPORTANCE IS AS A BRITISH NAVAL STATION,
BUT VALETTA IS A BUSY PORT OF CALL WITH A LARGE TRANSIT TRADE



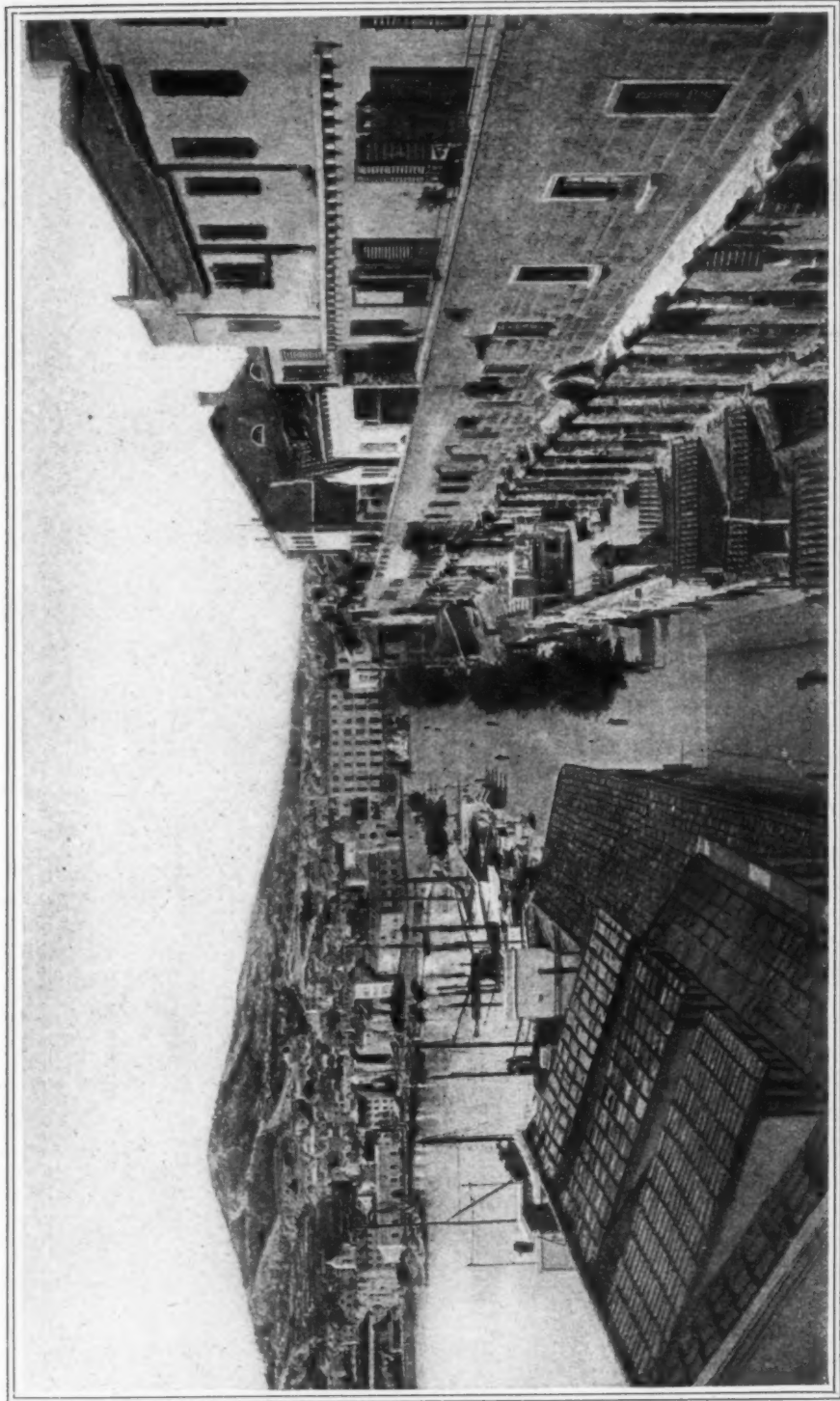
NAPLES, LOOKING ACROSS THE HEAD OF THE BAY TO MOUNT VESUVIUS—BESIDES BEING ONE OF THE MOST PICTURESQUE CITIES IN THE WORLD, NAPLES RANKS AS THE CHIEF SEAPORT OF ITALY, HAVING SURPASSED GENOA IN RECENT YEARS



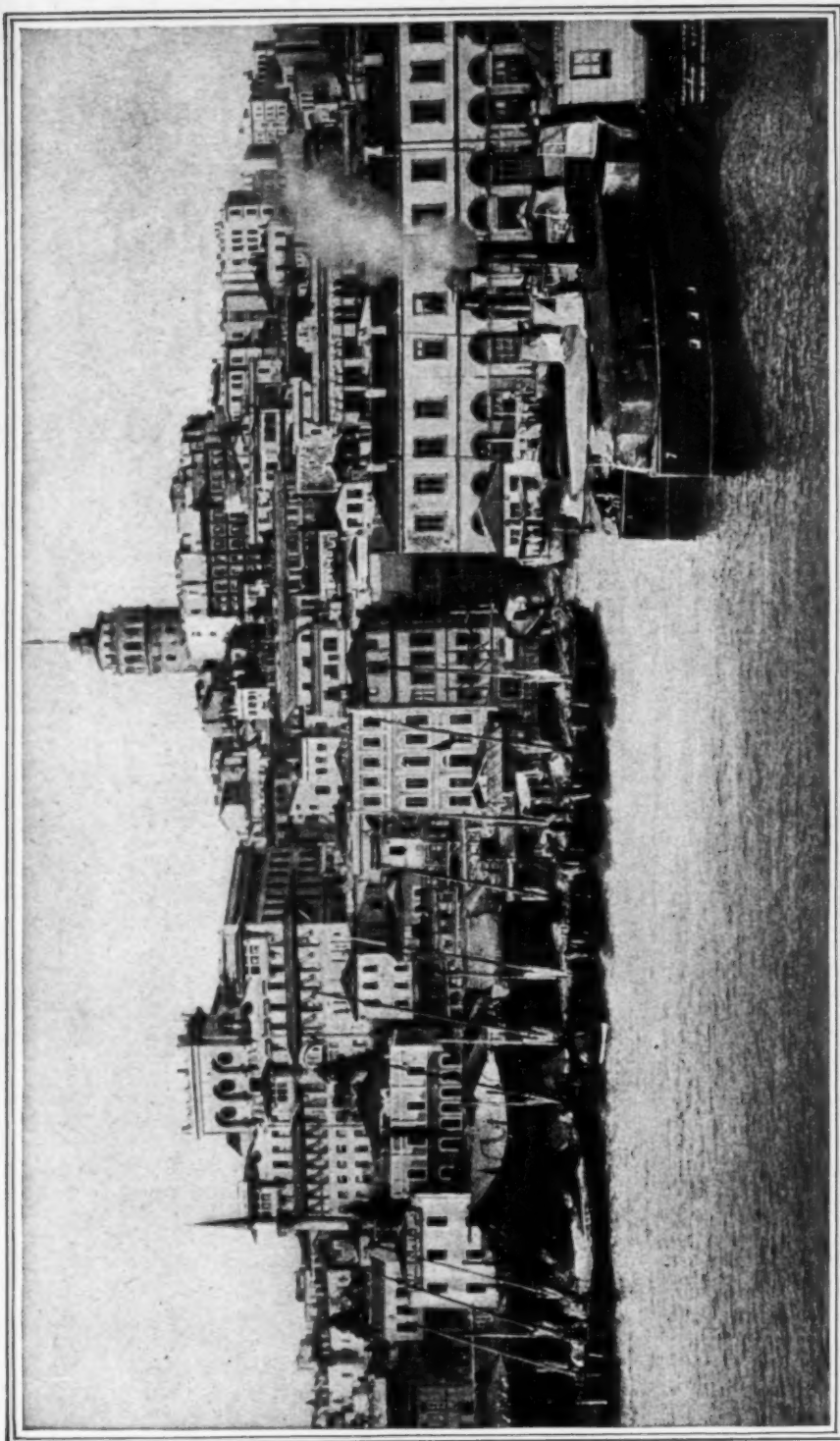
VENICE, THE UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL CITY OF THE ADRIATIC LAGOONS—ONCE THE MAGNIFICENT MISTRESS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, VENICE IS TO-DAY AN IMPORTANT NAVAL STATION AND COMMERCIAL HARBOR, RANKING THIRD AMONG THE SEAPORTS OF ITALY



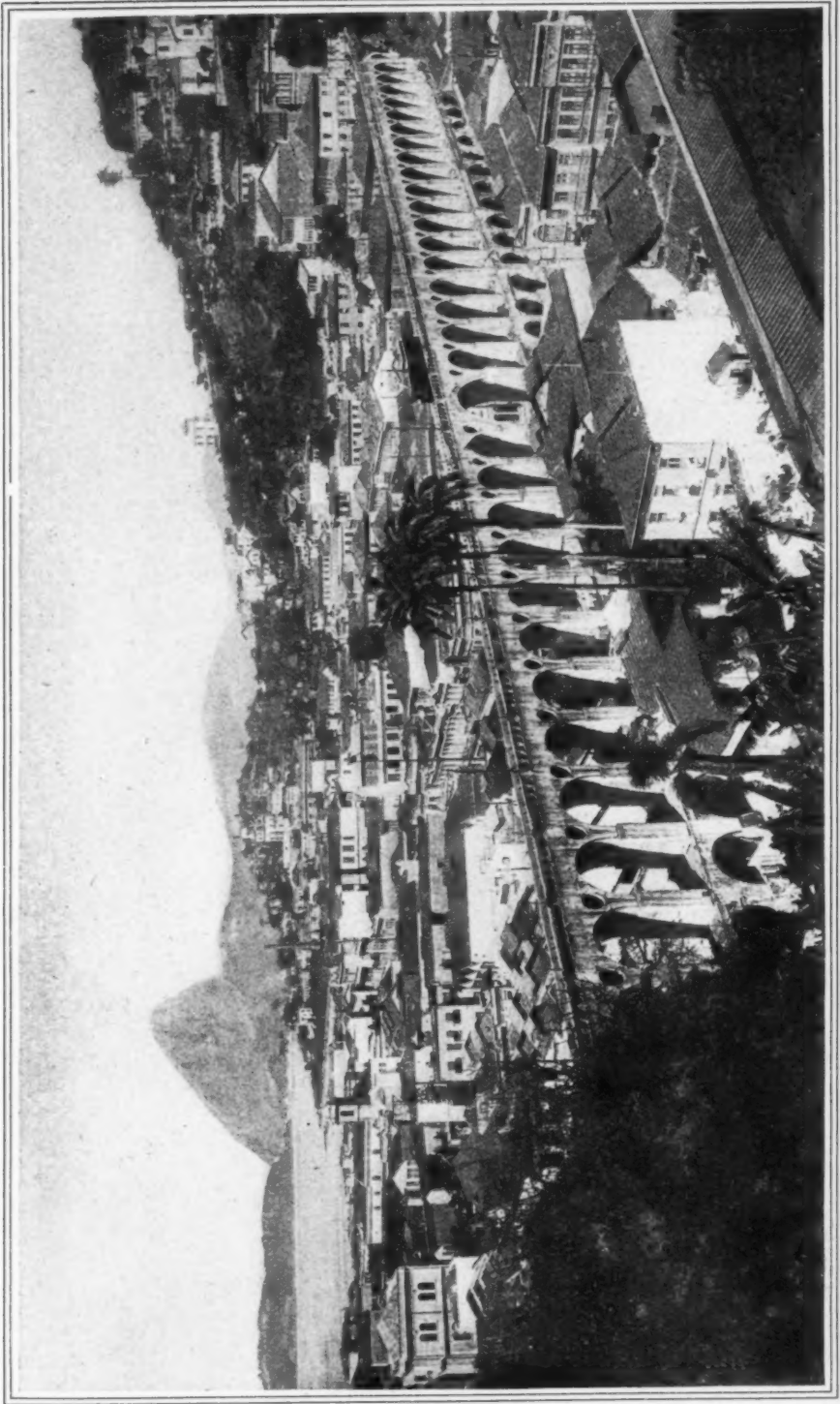
FIUME, A BONE OF CONTENTION BETWEEN THE ITALIANS AND THE JUGOSLAVS, AND THE SCENE OF GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO'S SENSATIONAL INTERVENTION — BEFORE THE WAR FIUME, WHICH THE SLAVS CALL RIEKA, WAS THE ONE IMPORTANT PORT OF HUNGARY



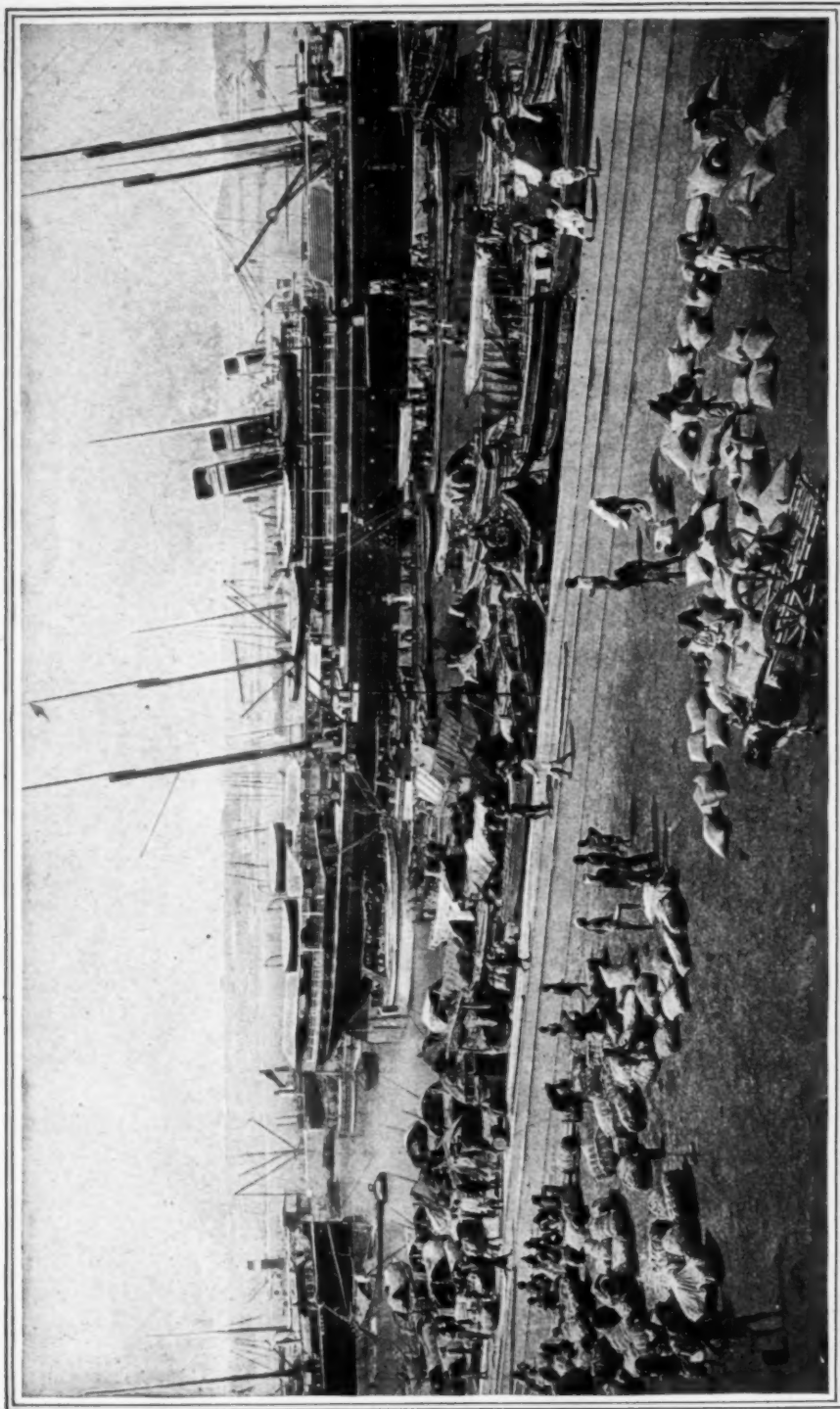
SPALATO, ANOTHER PORT IN THE DISPUTED REGION OF THE ADRIATIC—SPALATO IS IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF WHAT WAS FORMERLY THE AUSTRIAN PROVINCE OF DALMATIA, AND IS LIKELY TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE NEW JUGOSLAV STATE



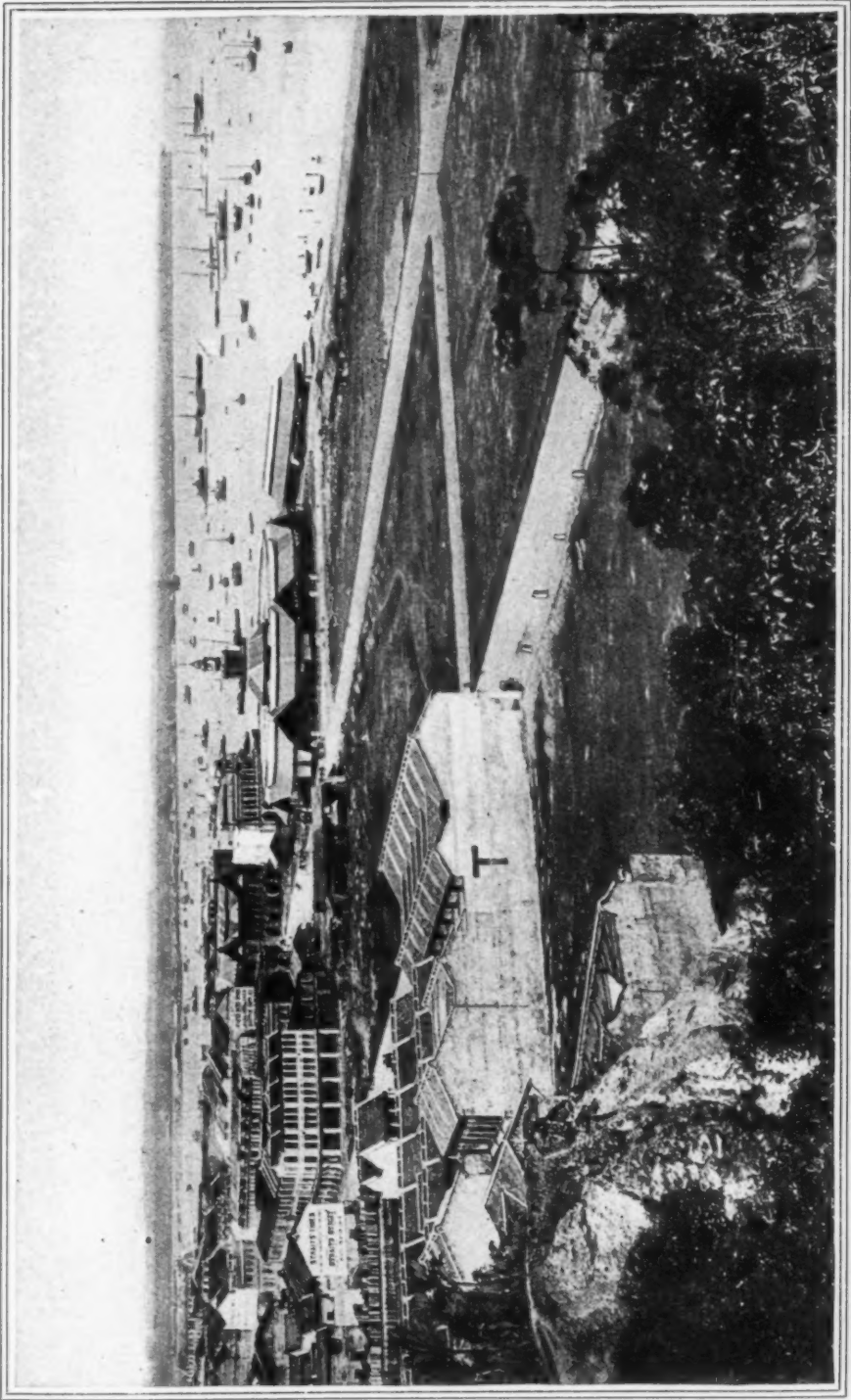
THE GOLDEN HORN, THE HARBOR OF CONSTANTINOPLE, LOOKING OVER TO THE SUBURB OF GALATA—WHATEVER DISPOSITION MAY BE MADE OF THE FORMER TURKISH CAPITAL, ITS UNIQUE SITUATION AT THE GATES OF EUROPE AND ASIA DESTINES IT TO REMAIN A GREAT CENTER OF WORLD TRAFFIC



RIO DE JANEIRO, WITH PART OF THE BAY AND THE CURIOUSLY SHAPED SUGARLOAF HILL IN THE BACKGROUND—WITH ITS FINE LANDLOCKED HARBOR, THE CHIEF CITY AND TRADE EMPORIUM OF BRAZIL HAS A GREAT FUTURE IN THE COMMERCE OF THE WORLD



THE HARBOR OF CALCUTTA, FORMED BY THE RIVER HUGLI, A BRANCH OF THE GANGES—CALCUTTA IS THE TRADE CENTER OF BENGAL AND THE METROPOLIS OF BRITISH INDIA, ALTHOUGH THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MOVED TO DELHI



SINGAPORE, THE CAPITAL OF THE BRITISH STRAITS SETTLEMENTS, A MODERN CITY FOUNDED JUST ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO BY SIR STAMFORD RAFFLES WHICH HAS BECOME THE GREATEST COMMERCIAL EMPORIUM OF SOUTHEASTERN ASIA



ANTWERP, THE SECOND CITY AND CHIEF SEAPORT OF BELGIUM, WITH A CAPACIOUS DEEP-WATER HARBOR FORMED BY THE RIVER SCHELDT—THE COMMERCE OF ANTWERP, DESTROYED DURING THE WAR BY THE GERMAN OCCUPATION AND THE ALLIED BLOCKADE, IS NOW RAPIDLY REVIVING, AND A LARGE SCHEME OF HARBOR EXTENSION, BEGUN BEFORE THE WAR, IS NEARING COMPLETION

From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York



His Home-Town Girl

BY THOMAS ADDISON

Illustrated by George E. Wolfe

JERRY STUBBS, tawny-haired, blue-eyed, tanned, and twenty-four, sauntered along the main street of the little eastern-coast town of Perryville on a fair June morn. His overseas cap was perched jauntily on his head, two wound-stripes flamed on his sleeve, and a D. S. C. ribbon decorated his sturdy breast.

Jerry had got home from the demobilization camp late the night before, and this was his first appearance in the public eye of his home town. His progress was in the nature of a triumph. Girls stopped and welcomed him effusively, and men shook his hand and slapped him on the shoulder until he might well have imagined himself either a pump or a feather bed.

He came presently to a doorway that

marked the entrance to the dingy courtroom of one Andrew Nash, justice of the peace. On the point of issuing from this lair of the law Jerry spied a figure that on occasion in times past—say immediately succeeding a raid on a melon-patch—had filled him with dark forebodings of his future. Now, however, he paused and viewed it with grinning equanimity.

The man was Peter Dorsey, who for as far as Jerry's memory could run had been the outward and visible manifestation of Perryville's police powers—in other words, the town constable. Peter's years of service and his heart of kindness for his fellows had made him a privileged character. He was tall and bony, gray-eyed and thin-lipped, and his long, lean face was shaved

clean save for a wisp of grizzled whisker hedging his ears. He looked the born Irishman he was, and the great melting-pot had failed to dissolve entirely the sonorous brogue he had brought over with him from the bogs of Kilkenny a quarter of a century before.

Jerry stepped forward to greet him. Peter drew away in mimic puzzlement.

"What have we here in monkey-cap an' ribbons?" he boomed in a deep bass. "Is it frind or foe, or just Jerry Stubbs that many's the time I shud have jailed, an' didn't, in a day that's gone?"

"It's Corporal Stubbs now, sir, or was until yesterday," grinned the boy, as they struck hands in hearty good-will.

"Corporal Stubbs! Glory be! I heard ye'd come back, lad—like the bad penny that's not to be rid of. Well, well, it's not to be helped, so we'll all have to make the best of it."

"It may soften your remorse for not jugging me when you had a chance," said Jerry roguishly, "to know that I've seen the inside of a guard-house more than once since leaving you. I'd be a major-general now if it hadn't been for that."

Peter Dorsey's eyes twinkled with the fun that was ever in him despite the austerity of his calling.

"Saints preserve us!" he boomed. "'Tis wan of the wonders of the war what it has done for the rag-tag an' bobtail of the earth. Ye got a thrick o' words along wid your deviltries, it seems; more 'n my good frind Henry Wilkins—God rest him!—cud iver cram into your pate in high school."

"I've had associates, sir," said Jerry.

His shoulders squared a little. It was a gesture of pride, and Peter, noting it, felt a pricking to discover its origin.

"Hah! Ye've had associates, is it?" he grunted. "An' so ye had before you wint away. H-m! I've a pair of seegars in me pocket, an' Squire Nash is out. Will ye come in peaceable an' talk, or must I constrain ye to it wid the power that's vested in me?"

"I'll come," said Jerry meekly, and they went in and sprawled at ease on the creaking court-room chairs.

"'Tis not of your heroic deeds in battle I'd have ye discourse to me, Corporal Stubbs," observed Peter, rolling his cigar in his mouth. "I've read of 'em, an' thried to belave 'em. Let it rest there. 'Tis of

them associates I'd be askin' you. Was they, now, any of them, little Frinch gur-ruls they say can charm the birds off the trees?"

Jerry laughed.

"Not this bird. American girls have it all over them."

"Why, bless me, the lad has brought home a thimbleful o' sinse in his caput!" ejaculated Peter gratefully. "Go on. I'm listenin'."

Jerry sobered. A distant look was in his eye when he spoke.

"It was like this, Mr. Dorsey. I was in hospital ten weeks with that last wound. The nurses were American ladies, the pick of the finest they make here at home; and a fellow had to live up to them, you know. He had to try—"

"Married, av coorse?" put in Peter, his tone mild as milk.

"Some, but mostly single—"

"Old maids, no doubt, wid a mission," interjected Peter again in the same lacteal accents.

Jerry stared at him.

"Why," he cried, "what makes you think that? There were lots of them no older than me—and younger!"

"Um!" grunted Peter. "An' was it wan o' these lasht ye had to coddle you? Was it from her ye tuk lessons in ilocution, as per sample ye're givin' me?"

"She brought me books to read, and talked with me, and wrote letters for me," said Jerry earnestly. "She was—er—specially attentive to me because, you see, she knew about me here at home."

"God save us! She knew that an' nursed you! An' what was this angel named here on earth, if I might make so bould as to ask? Spake it! Me ears are achuned to hivenly sounds."

"Her father has a cottage on the Point, and she will be here this summer. It was Miss Hortense Vandervelt."

Jerry let fall the name with a soft reverence that brought a quizzical look to the constable's face.

"O-ho!" he snorted. "Ye've had associates indade! The Vandervelt millions—my, my! It smothers me to think of 'em. An' did wan or two of them foine letthers she wrote for you bear the address of Miss Mary Wilkins, Perryville, I'd like to know?"

"The letters were to my mother," said Jerry shortly.

Peter coughed and scratched his left whisker with a scrawny finger.

"H-m! 'Tis a foine trait o' character to be mindful of wan's mother, an' aisy to write to her wid a borrowed pen," he remarked after a moment. "Nach'rally ye wudn't be wantin' to do the same to Mary Wilkins—not by another gur-rul's hand," he added. "That's different, eh, lad? No doubt ye had to wait till ye cud do it yourself."

He nodded jocosely at the boy, though in the back of his head a doubt harried him. He had seen Mary Wilkins grow up under his eye, and he set store by her.

Jerry did not answer him at once. He fidgeted in his chair, examined his cigar as if it had suddenly assumed unfamiliar proportions, and looked away into the street.

"I haven't written to Mary in a long time," he said finally. "It sort of dropped off, our letter-writing."

"Oh, so it dhropped off!" murmured Peter. "But wan of ye must 'a' let go first. Was it Mary, now?"

Jerry flung his cigar petulantly into the box of sawdust by the cold stove.

"Oh, gee, I don't know!" he exclaimed. "It just sort of faded out. Look here, Mr. Dorsey, if it was anybody but you I'd tell him to mind his own business!"

"Av coorse," said Peter equably. "Anybody else wud do it, for they wudn't give a thrip if ye wint wrong or right, Jerry, me lad; but I do. I've known ye since ye was a little bare-toed rapscallion of a melon-thief, an' Mary since she was a wee, laugh-in', brown-eyed baby in her mother's arms. Ye growed up t'gether, an' wint t'gether, an' by all the laws of man an' nachur ye'd 'a' stayed t'gether till death did you part—if it hadn't been for this murtherin' war."

Jerry sought for a reply, but before he could find it Peter went on.

"Tell me this," he boomed out clangorously. "Did any one write to you that Ham Carlton—him of the flat feet they'd not let go in the army—was philanderin' around wid Mary?"

"What?"

Jerry eyed the constable with a small start of surprise. Carlton had run out to speak to him, fraternally cordial, only a few minutes before.

"You heard me."

"No, they didn't."

"H-m! Let me see. Whin was it ye stopped writin' to her? Was it only whin ye got this lasht wound ye spake of?"

"About then, I guess. But—"

"Whist! It was along about then Ham begun to wheedle himself in wid Mary. Can ye blame the gur-rul? Your mother was gettin' letthers from ye, if only by second hand, an' why shudn't Mary? Wud ye expect the colleen to eat out the heart of her on account of a flipperty noodledick that was pitched into grand society by the scruff o' the neck, wid perhaps the prod of a scrap o' Dutch lead to help him?"

"There's no reason why I should expect anything of her, or she of me. As for Carlton—" Jerry shrugged to convey his supreme indifference to the young woman's more intimate relations.

"Oh, well, then, there's no har-rm done on either side," said Peter with apparent relief. "An' Ham cud be worse than he is for a choice. He's cashier in the bank, an' wan of these days may be prisident. Ye never can tell. H-m! I suppose yourself 'll be goin' back now into your father's grocery, eh? 'Tis a foine opportunity it 'll give ye to visit the Point wid the butther an' eggs—unless it's the front door ye're expectin' to go in at!"

Jerry stood up abruptly.

"I guess I'll be getting along. I'm glad to have seen you again, Mr. Dorsey. It's good to be home with friends. They take"—he brought it out with a weak attempt at railery—"they take such a lot of interest in your personal affairs."

Peter let him go. He sat where he was, ruminating over the stub of his cigar.

"May it please the coort," he said half aloud after a while, "I'll go bail for this boy. There's no harm in him—only a twist in his wits. Lave him go his gait. 'Tis the wan way to cure a fool of his folly!"

II

JERRY struck off from Main Street into a byway that led at length to a low-lying stretch of rocky pasture-land. He had lost for the moment his zest for being lionized. He wanted to be alone. His talk with Peter Dorsey weighed upon him. The constable was a privileged person, it was true, but there were times when he pushed his privilege too far.

Jerry sat down on a boulder of gleaming granite, and proceeded to argue with himself. Peter Dorsey, he premised, was an

officious nuisance. It was none of the old man's concern that he had ceased writing to Mary. They were not engaged. They had had, perhaps, some foolish sort of boy-and-girl understanding when he went away to training-camp, but all the fellows had understandings of the kind. It was the rage to say you had left a dandy girl at home waiting for you.

Besides, that was eighteen months ago, and a lot had happened since then. Soldiers like Jerry were not boys any longer, and boyish fancies had departed from them. They were men now, veterans of an enormous experience.

Still, he felt himself forced to admit that Peter Dorsey was right in one respect—in all likelihood he would have married Mary if it hadn't been for the war. She was amiable, sincere, and utterly dependable. Of all the girls in town he would have chosen Mary had he stayed at home and known nothing of this larger life that had been unfolded to him.

A disturbing thought obtruded on Jerry's reflections at this juncture. What was Mary's attitude toward him? Was she grieved because he had let her drop away from his life without even a final word? For it was he who had allowed their correspondence to "fade out," as, inexactly, he had defined it to Peter.

Mary had written last. Her letter had reached him in hospital. When it came he was in the delirium of fever. Afterward, long afterward, when the crisis had passed, Miss Vandervelt had given it to him. She had said in tender teasing of the white-faced boy who symbolized to her the host of her young compatriots embattled against a stalking wickedness:

"It is from home, isn't it—from *her*?"

And Jerry had mumbled something about "an old aunt of mine," and slipped the letter unopened under his pillow. And he never read it!

He had felt then, in a nebulous way, as another Peter, not surnamed Dorsey, must have felt when he denied the One who loved him. It came back to him now, that moment, and his face burned with the recollection. How would Mary look upon him could she know of this?

But his thought rebounded to a brighter plane. Mary would never know, or care to know. Hamilton Carlton had consoled her—if she had needed consolation. Jerry would call on her this selfsame night, and

let her see that on his part the old friendliness still endured. He would put himself right with her, as far as that went.

Jerry heaved a long, luxurious sigh as he disposed of this entanglement. He turned to the contemplation of a roseate future in which he, as a thriving city man—he was for quitting Perryville presently—could aspire to the goddess enshrined in his heart.

Had he not received encouragement from her? Had she not let him hold her hand for long minutes when, half-conscious, half-delirious, he had cried out feebly for companionship? Had she not, once, even permitted him to press his lips to her fingers when she was ministering to him? And when he had rejoined his division, just as the armistice was signed, and had written to her, had she not answered, with a hasty line penned under stress of many duties but breathing a sweet solicitude for his welfare?

And now, only the other day, he had read in the paper that she had returned to America and was coming to her home by the sea for a needed rest! He would see her, and speak with her, and— Jerry gave himself over to a wild rhapsody of romantic day-dreams as he sat there in the rock-strewn cow-pasture under the bland, incurious sun.

He rose at last and flung out his arms in a gesture that embraced all the glory of hope's beckoning beauty. Then he strode back to the town, alert again for the plaudits of admiring friends.

Coming toward him, as he neared the post-office door, was the trim, businesslike figure of a young woman. She carried a handful of letters, and she was walking briskly to catch the outgoing noon mail. For a fluttering instant Jerry's step wavered, but the girl's did not falter; she came straight on, her dark eyes dwelling pleasantly on him, her full, firm lips curved in a smile of friendly greeting.

"Mary!" he exclaimed.

"Jerry! What a pleasure to see you home again!"

The thrill of a real gladness was in her voice. Jerry felt it. Instinctively his hand tightened on hers.

"No greater pleasure than mine," he said, and stuck there.

He could muster up nothing else to meet the occasion. For a breath of time silence intervened. Mary broke it.

"You are looking fine, Jerry. Your wound—the last—was in your lungs, your mother said; and now you are well and strong. It is like a miracle. But then what wonderful nursing you had!"

Jerry, strive as he would, could not keep back the mounting color. He had written to his mother of Miss Vandervelt.

"You are looking fine yourself, Mary," he brought out with an effort.

"I'm feeling fine. Business life agrees with me."

"Business! You're in business? Why—since when?"

"Since December. I'm in Mr. Timmons's real-estate and insurance office."

"Bill Timmons? He must be branching out."

Her eyes fell from his strangely. She said in a curiously patient voice:

"Yes. He has the county agency for the Columbia Life. I do his bookkeeping and stenography. I went to the city and took a business course to fit myself for the position. I had to do something to help out mother, after father died last summer."

"Why—yes—I suppose so," said Jerry awkwardly. "I was awfully sorry to hear of his death."

"You wrote me a beautiful letter about him, Jerry. I prized it."

She waited expectantly. That was the last letter she had had from him. Perhaps now he would mention her last letter to him—the one in which she told him of Mr. Timmons.

"I thought a lot of Mr. Wilkins, and he did a lot for me—made me learn," was all that Jerry offered.

The thudding of the canceling-stamp was borne to them from the inner precincts of the post-office. Mary prepared to go.

"I must hurry and get these letters in," she said. And then, because it seemed preposterous to leave him so, this childhood friend who had been so dear to her, she added warmly: "We are all proud of the distinction you won at Chavigny, Jerry. And oh, how proud your father and mother must be!"

She turned, but he laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"Wait! I want to come and see you, Mary—to-night."

She hesitated, her lashes lowered.

"I have an engagement for to-night," she told him.

"Well, to-morrow night."

She shook her head in gentle negation.

"No. Sunday afternoon, if you wish. Not until then."

She looked up at him, smiled, and went in. Jerry stood motionless, gazing after her with a puzzled frown. He was trying to square in his mind a proposition that involved two totally opposed dependents, to wit—Mary was just what she used to be, yet decidedly different; and at the same time, though she had never been accounted a pretty girl, he discovered, after this long absence, that she had a charm of feature amazingly new to him.

He laughed queerly. Her engagement to-night was with Ham Carlton, of course, and for all the other nights of the week. Time was, he reflected, when he would not have asked if he might call. He would have gone when it suited him, royally assured that Mary would be at home and waiting for him.

Some one touched his elbow, and he turned to face Peter Dorsey.

"Whist!" said that worthy mysteriously. "I've a present for ye, lad. I came across it in Sunday's paper from the city, an' I fished it out after you left me."

He thrust into the boy's hand a rotogravure portrait of a young woman in Red Cross coif and gown. A line below it read:

Miss Hortense Vandervelt, Only Daughter of John Vandervelt, Millionaire Mill-Owner.

"I misdoubted whether or no she'd given you her pitcher," continued Peter gravely; "an' I sez to meself, at least 'twill do no harm to take him this. My, my, a grand lady she is—handsome till it aches your heart to look on her. Faith, any man wud be proud to tote butther an' eggs to the kitchen door for her!"

He was gone before Jerry could master his tongue to answer him.

III

To become a thriving business man in the city it is first necessary to find a job there. Jerry, impatient to make a beginning, talked his project over with his father, concealing, however, the impelling motive underlying it. Now Stubbs, Sr., was a plain, plodding person, yet not without a modicum of wisdom. "Give a horse his head and he'll soon sober to a trot," was a favorite saying of his.

"Go, and good luck to you, boy," he told his son. "I'm glad to know the army



ONCE SHE HAD EVEN PERMITTED HIM TO PRESS HIS LIPS TO HER FINGERS WHEN SHE WAS MINISTERING TO HIM

hasn't made a loafer of you. Look around, and if you see anything better than the half-interest I'm ready to give you in this grocery, nab it."

Groceries! "Butther an' eggs"! Jerry recoiled from the thought. He would approach his deity through a channel less grossly material than the alimentary canal. So, without trade or profession at his back, he took train for the city early on Thursday, with Heaven knew what altitudinous visions in his mind. And he carried secretly with him the picture of Miss Hortense Vandervelt, tenderly gummed to a square of white cardboard. It was to be the guide and inspiration of his quest. It failed him!

He was home again on Saturday afternoon, humbled in spirit and much enlightened. Jobs in the city were not to be picked like gooseberries from a bush. They were not to be picked at all, in fact. There were five applicants for every place, and a ribbon on your blouse got you nothing but a hand-shake and suave regrets.

Stubbs, Sr., heard his son's story with an impassive face.

"Something may turn up later to suit you," he remarked. "You're welcome to your bed and board while waiting. And your mother won't be ill-pleased to have you about the house."

Sallying forth from this interview, Jerry encountered Peter Dorsey passing by.

"Faith, an' is it here ye are?" exclaimed the constable, with a fine show of surprise. "I made sure ye'd come back from town on the yacht."

"What do you mean?"

Jerry's tone was caustic. Peter Dorsey was palling on him.

"Mane! What shud I mane but what I said?" rejoined Peter. "The Vandervelts are at the Point. They came screechin' in not two hours gone."

"Oh!" murmured Jerry.

"An'," proceeded Peter, "I sez to me-self: 'Aha, Corporal Stubbs has saved himself the price of a ticket home. 'Tis a long head, ears an' all, he has. An' to-morrer I'll see him in the big car rowlin' up to church wid a Vandervelt on aich side, an' all Perryville green-eyed wid envy. How comes it, corporal, ye're not at this prisent moment lolling in the lap o' looxury at the Point, 'stead of standin' here in Main Street like a pin-feathered gosling gawkin' at me?'"

"Oh, you go to blazes!" jerked out Jerry in a flash of fury.

He stalked angrily away. The tall, bony man scratched a whisker meditatively as his eyes followed him.

"Um!" he grunted. "'Tis workin' on him, but devil take me if I can say yet whether it will help or hinder."

On his way home Jerry noted, on the farther side of the town square, a group of young people in Saturday half-holiday array sauntering harborward in the sweet evening air. Mary was of them, and so was Ham Carlton, the bank clerk. Mary waved her hand cheerily at him, and Ham was no less demonstrative. In other days Jerry would have joined them as a matter of course; now, still hot in resentment at Peter's uncouth pleasantries, and not of a mind, so he told himself, to "butt in" where he wasn't wanted, he acknowledged the greeting carelessly and proceeded on his way.

As he walked homeward his step grew lighter, and his heart began to carol gaily in his breast. *She* was here, breathing, as it were, the same air, treading the same earth, smiled on by the same brilliant sky. Jerry could feel the radiance of her presence all about him.

He cast back to the summer before the war began. He remembered that she came to church regularly in those days, with a wonderful mother who sat like a queen beside her princess daughter while the Rev. Lorimer Cudd pounded away with his pestle and mortar of theology in the pulpit above them. He laughed in the exultancy of his soaring spirits.

"And I was afraid of her!" he cried. "Almost afraid to look at her! Gee, what a green kid I was!"

Jerry did not go to church with his family in the morning. He wished to find a corner by himself where he could worship his own particular deity in his own particular way. So he evaded them with a patched-up excuse, and arrived after the service had begun.

Yes, the Vandervelts were there. The big car was parked across the way in the shade of an immemorial elm. Jerry tiptoed into the edifice and up to the almost deserted gallery. He found a seat to one side, from which he could command the body of the church.

Immediately, far up to the front, his eye fell upon the gracious form of his divinity.

He could have picked her out among ten thousand!

Then he caught his breath uncomfortably. There was but one other occupant of the pew, and it was not a woman. It was a man—a young man in the uniform of a major of artillery, with a double row of ribbons on his coat.

Jerry stared at him darkly; but the cloud lifted, and he smiled, jeering at himself. It was her brother, of course. He was some years older than Hortense. Jerry could not recall his name, but he remembered that in those prehistoric days before 1914 young Vandervelt came occasionally to the Point. He did not stay long at a time; his pleasure seemed to lie elsewhere.

Complacently Jerry allowed his glance to rove over the gathering below, picking out old acquaintances and friends. He came to a sharp stop at the Wilkins's family pew. Mary's eyes were raised to where he sat. For a long moment she regarded him, and Jerry found himself flinching under her calm, still scrutiny. He was relieved when her eyes released him.

He passed hurriedly on from her—and again came to a stop, abrupt and marveling. When had Peter Dorsey taken to Protestant churchgoing? For there he was, stiff and bony, seated just under the opposite wing of the gallery. He did not look up; he seemed curiously intent upon the deliverances of the Rev. Mr. Cudd.

With the first note of the final hymn Jerry hastened down to the church door and out to the street. The Vandervelt car had moved from across the way, and was now at the hither curb. Jerry took up a position near it. Soldierly erect, and with pulses drumming, he waited.

People began to stroll leisurely out, chatting with the resiliency of spirit attendant upon penance dutifully done and dinner in the offing. They hovered, buzzing about, on the broad flagging at the door, and on the steps, and on the walk, dissolving slowly into smaller and smaller groups, and finally drifting away.

But there were still many left when *she* appeared, shepherded solicitously by the bareheaded Mr. Cudd to the last confines of his fold. She came down the steps, the artillery officer at her side. She crossed the walk toward her car, and Jerry brought his hand up in salute.

The major returned the salute with an ennuied perfunctoriness, but Miss Van-

dervelt nodded and smiled. Her name falling tremulously from Jerry's lips brought her to a pause of mild surprise. She looked at him inquiringly.

"I am Jerry Stubbs," he vouchsafed expectantly.

"Jerry Stubbs—yes?" Very pleasant was her voice, but with no smallest hint of recognition tingeing it.

"Base hospital—Fismes—after Chavigny," stammered Jerry. "You—you nursed me."

"O-oh!" Miss Vandervelt's eyes were suddenly soft and tender with that maternal light born of rendering testimony to untold sacrificial sufferings. "You are one of my boys. How very glad I am to know it!"

She put out her daintily gloved hand, and Jerry's closed tremblingly on it. Still she did not recognize him, he could see; and in the same instant he perceived that there was little wonder for it. He was well now, and strong and tanned—not the pallid-faced "casualty" she had known. His voice was vibrant when he spoke.

"I guess I'm not looking like I did when I left you. That's the reason you can't just place me. I'm Jerry Stubbs, of Perryville—this town. We used to talk about it, and the Point, and—and things like that. You wrote letters to my mother for me—Mrs. Abel Stubbs—and laughed when I asked to be remembered to Deacon Perkins, our brindled cat."

She laughed now, with a rich, throbbing note.

"Why, yes, indeed, I recall you, Jerry Stubbs. You were wounded in the chest, and made a splendid recovery." She turned to her companion. "Philip, you must know Jerry. I was very fond of him, and proud—such a brave, patient, cheerful boy. This is Major Hawley, Jerry."

Major Hawley, looking intensely bored, extended a hand and said:

"Glad you came through all right, Stubbs. Lucky—what? Well, Hortense, are you ready?"

There was dismissal in his tone for Jerry, an air of licensed privilege toward the woman. She submissively made ready to depart.

"You must come to see us some time, Jerry Stubbs," she smiled. "I always have a welcome for my boys."

Jerry, frozen and without speech, watched them drive away. So this was all—a

hand-shake—a smile—a dozen words! And the man with her—

"You must come to see us," his dry lips framed. "Us—ah!"

He turned to go. A number of people still lingered in neighborly converse about the church door. They had all seen, and possibly heard. Among them were his father and mother, and Mary and Mrs. Wilkins; and coming down the steps toward him was Peter Dorsey.

Jerry wheeled and plunged blindly across the street.

IV

It was long after the dinner-hour when Jerry came in that day. He did not explain his absence, and his mother did not ask him to. Stubbs, Sr., had arranged that with her.

"It's best to let a sick dog alone; he'll get over it quicker," he had said in his homely way.

So Jerry was let alone except for a casual remark to the effect that he would find something for him in the oven if he was hungry. And—alas for the potency of mind over matter!—Jerry discovered after a time that he *was* hungry, and sat himself down in the kitchen and polished off his platter.

It refreshed him. He caught a glimpse of light shining through his dun and dreary future, a mystic ray sent to lead him out of this slough of despond in which he was floundering. In short, Jerry began to perceive that possibly there was something to be salvaged from his wrecked young life.

He glanced at the clock on the mantel. It was past four. Mary Wilkins would be expecting him, perhaps. After what had happened he shrank from the thought of seeing her; and yet, oddly, as the minutes ticked by, he detected in himself a ripening urge to go. It teased him till he succumbed to it!

"Hang it, I might as well!" he blurted out, and clapped on his cap.

But he retraced his steps from the door. He took a square of cardboard from his pocket, tore it carefully into fine bits, and dropped them on the smoldering coals of the kitchen stove. At least he would not call on Mary with that in his possession. With a dolorous sigh he set forth.

Mary was alone on the porch as he came up. She was in white, her dark hair fluffed

about her temples, a red rose pinned on her breast.

"Shall we sit out or go in, or would you rather walk?" she asked, after greetings had passed.

"Oh, anything," he answered gloomily.

"Or," she suggested in her tranquil voice, "shall we go around to the grape-arbor? It is pleasant there at this hour, cool and quiet."

He remembered the long, leafy grape-arbor. It was on a rise at some distance behind the house. Looking the length of it, one had a sort of telescopic view of the harbor, with Pony Island in the background beyond.

"We will go there," he said.

When they were seated on the bench that skirted the trellis, Jerry lit a cigarette and gazed absently at the outer prospect. He seemed to be pondering something.

Mary did not disturb him. The excellent gift of repression was hers. She knew the value of silences. So she did not speak. She let her hands lie reposefully in her lap, and looked dreamily off at the far, dancing waters. Jerry flipped his cigarette in among the opposite leaves.

"Mary," he said, though his eyes did not seek her.

"Yes," she responded.

He waited, then went on, painstakingly distinct and deliberate of utterance.

"I've felt as mean as a dog for a long time whenever I thought of you. I feel as mean as one now—a dirty, sneaking cur!"

As he still avoided her eyes, she allowed herself a faint, secret smile.

"I couldn't think of you as a dog, Jerry—at least, not that kind of a dog," she said quietly.

"Well, I'm just that, whatever you'd like to think," he asserted. "When a fellow goes back on a tried and true friend, I guess there's no name too mean to call him. That's what I did to you, Mary. I've got to tell you about it—I've got to. That last letter of yours—I didn't read it. I didn't open it. I tore it up and threw it away."

The color dropped slowly from Mary's face; but it returned in a surging wave.

"Why, then, you did name yourself precisely aright!" she cried out, hot with anger. "I cannot better it."

He looked at her now.

"I could," he declared bitterly; "but for the sake of decency I'll let it stand."

You thought, perhaps, that your letter never got to me—"

"I did not! It had my return address on it."

It was a fact that had quite gone out of his head until now. He was discomfited by it, but he said:

"Yes, I remember that. You thought, then, that because I was wounded—"

"I did not!" she broke in again passionately. "You found some one to write for you to your mother—I knew that. Had you wanted to, you could have got her to write to me. Not that I care—now," she protested haughtily; "but then it—it vexed me." She would not speak the poignant word that spelled her hurt. "Was it this that you came to talk about?" she inquired with elaborate sarcasm.

"Partly," he answered, and fell silent for a while.

It was borne in on him that Mary sensed accurately the cause of his defection, but was too proud to tax him with it. And it pierced him further to know that she had witnessed the inglorious shattering of his dream and was too kind at heart to triumph over him.

"Partly that," he repeated. "We've been friends a good long time, and I can't recall that I ever lied to you—ever told you an intentional untruth, I mean. But acting a lie is as bad as telling one, or worse, and I didn't want to keep it up. I couldn't—not with you, Mary."

His tone, the droop of his shoulders, pictured his utter dejection of spirit. The girl's expression softened.

"Well, that is over with," she said. "You say you came partly to talk with me about that. What was the other reason?"

"I just wanted to see you, Mary," he replied simply.

Her teeth drew down upon her lip, and she was still. He continued with difficulty:

"I've been all kinds of a fool, and didn't know it; but I know it now. It—it's like getting over a fever, and seeing things in their true proportions again."

Still she held her peace.

"I suppose I have no chance to regain your friendship after this," he went on. "You were loyal, and I was not. You couldn't ever trust me again—as a friend. And besides"—he attempted to speak in a lighter tone—"you are not in need of a

friend now. Peter Dorsey has told me how things are."

"Peter Dorsey has told you—*what?*" Bewilderment was printed on her face.

"How things are with you and Ham Carlton," he stated.

A curious emotion stirred her. She put forth her hand and fastened it on his arm.

"Jerry Stubbs, look at me! Now, tell me exactly what Peter Dorsey said to you—his very words!"

Jerry let his eyes fall, and glowered at the ground. He found a vast distaste for the execution of this command; but finally he obeyed.

"He said Carlton was 'philandering around with you'—courting you, he meant. He took pains to let me know it—on my first day at home."

He felt Mary's fingers relax, and felt her draw away—and then he sat up very straight. Mary, her face in her hands, was rippling with laughter.

"Oh, oh! Peter Dorsey told you that; he told you *that!*" she murmured brokenly.

Jerry stared, and could muster not a word to say; so he waited dumbly until she should make an end of her merriment. This she did presently. She took her hand away, and looked at him, and her face grew serious. It was marked with a deep, eager earnestness.

"You thought," she said, "when I told you I had an engagement that night, it was with Hamilton?"

"Yes."

"Well, I did have. Hamilton is taking lessons in stenography from me. He wants to leave the bank and go into a railroad office in the city. The position requires the knowledge of stenography."

Jerry breathed deeply.

"Oh!" he muttered. "Does he take a lesson every night?" he added uneasily.

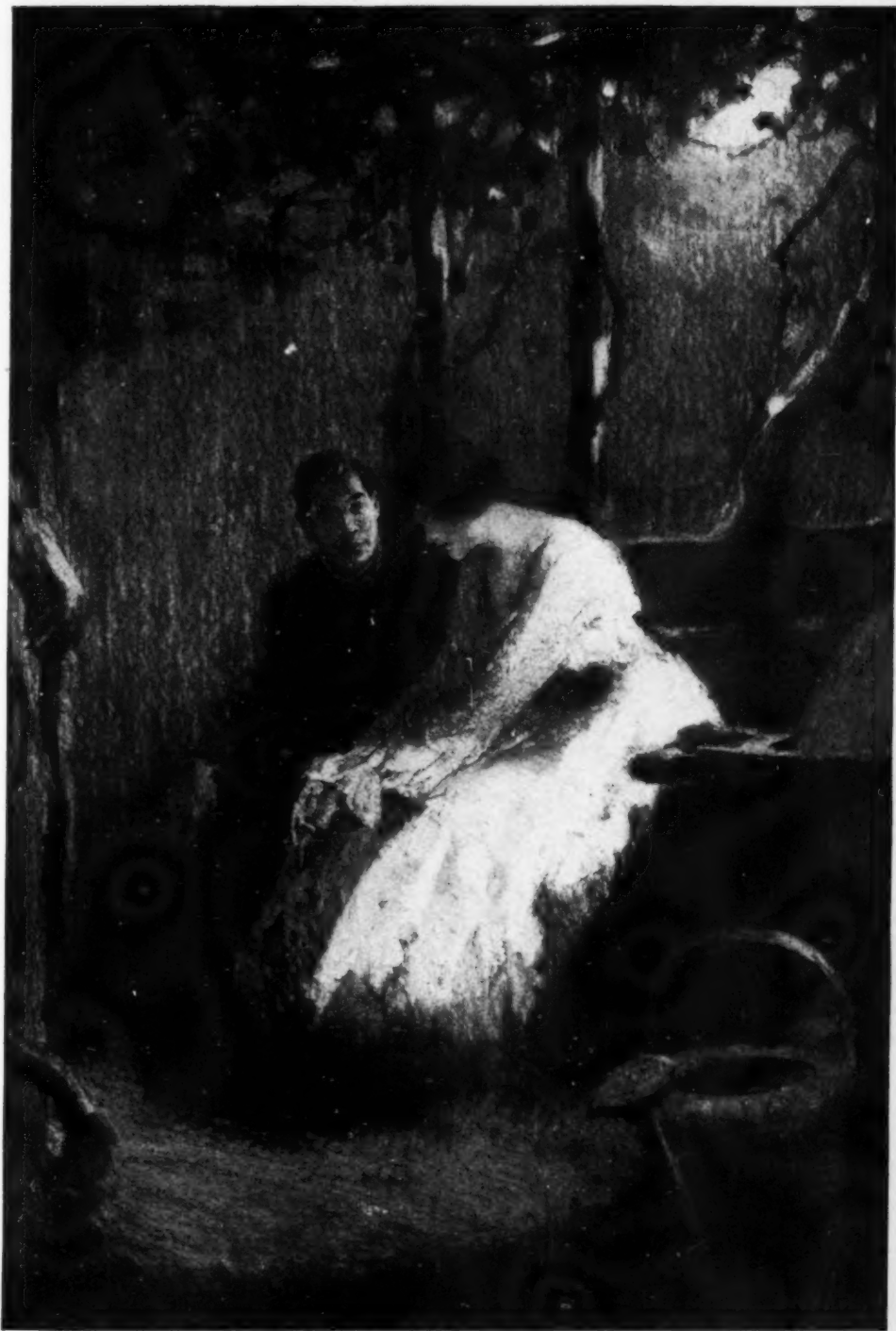
"No. On Mondays and Thursdays."

Jerry frowned.

"Well, why did you put me off those other nights?"

"Because"—and now her eyes shone on him with a lovely light—"because, Jerry, I am a woman."

He studied this cryptic affirmation for a full minute, and shook his head. It was beyond the grasp of his masculine intelligence. Finally, however, as he gazed at her, words came to him from a new and profound conviction—words that surpassed in their effect all the philosophical deductions



"I SUPPOSE I HAVE NO CHANCE TO REGAIN YOUR FRIENDSHIP AFTER THIS," HE WENT ON.
"YOU WERE LOYAL, AND I WAS NOT. YOU COULDN'T EVER TRUST ME AGAIN"

from her predicate that a wiser man might have advanced.

"I never realized till now what a beautiful woman you are, Mary!" he said solemnly.

Her face flamed as with the glory of the morning.

"If I am so to you, Jerry—ah, it suffices me!"

"You are beautiful, you are good, you are true. Mary, am I forgiven?"

"Oh, yes, yes—a thousand times!"

"For—for everything?"

"I know only that you are my dear, dear friend again."

He made a violent gesture of dissent, and leaped to his feet.

"Friend! That was well enough in other times; but now—I am not a boy any longer. I am a man, and I want my woman!"

He reached over and snatched her up into his arms, crushed her to his heart, and stood thus in challenge to whatever fates and furies might be leagued against him.

Her sole resistance was a sigh of infinite content.

V

PETER DORSEY came to a halt before Stubbs's grocery-store on the following Monday morning.

"Glory be! What's this I see?" he boomed.

Peter was unconscious of the rime, the remark being addressed in all prosaic earnestness to Jerry Stubbs, who, in an old suit of civilian clothes, was engaged in rustling a barrel of sugar from the sidewalk into the store. Jerry stopped and grinned at the constable.

"If you look closely, maybe you'll see that I'm working," he replied.

"'Tis hard to belave the eyes o' me, so I'll accipt your wor-rd for it," retorted Peter. "Is it like army pay ye're gettin', or the pay of a misguided parent to his projical son?"

"It's neither," said Jerry proudly. "I'm on a drawing account. Father has given me an interest in the business."

"Aha! Then it's not yerself 'll be carryin' the butther an' eggs to the Point this summer. 'Tis not compatible wid the dignity ye've acquired."

Jerry looked him steadily in the eye.

"If bought at our store, I'll be glad to carry them, and I'll take them to the kitchen door," he said.

"Um!" Peter fumbled at a whisker. "Something seems to have happened to you, lad."

"Something has," said Jerry, and that was all.

He buckled to his work again.

"Um!" grunted Peter.

He walked on, a well-satisfied smile on his lean, leathery face.

TO A CELESTIAL HOUSEWIFE

Oh, hills, I would that you might bathe her brows
In your high balm;
Too many little matters of the house
Destroy her calm.

She must be gay while others fume and fret,
And all day long
The business of her own deep soul forget
With merry tongue.

Would that on her this brook, with morning spell,
Might lay its hand,
Talking with liquid, lulling syllable
Through the green land.

She hath sore need of these immortal things
So blue and still—
To sit her down by the eternal springs,
And drink her fill.

Richard Le Gallienne

Has the Surgeon Discovered the Fountain of Youth?

THE STUDY OF THE DUCTLESS GLANDS AS THE PROBABLE SOURCES OF MAN'S VITAL POWERS—THE SENSATIONAL EXPERIMENTS OF DR. SERGE VORONOFF

By Leonard Keene Hirshberg, M.D. (Johns Hopkins)

IT is probable that Ponce de Leon and his company of adventurers knew little of medical science when they sought the legendary Fountain of Perpetual Youth among the swamps of Florida four hundred years ago. Nevertheless, both before and since the time of the famous Spanish explorer, the most learned investigators have never ceased to seek some elixir of life, some magic draft, some potent trick of science, that can rejuvenate the old like *Faust* in the oft-told story. One of the latest efforts in this line is the reported success of Dr. Serge Voronoff, a Russian surgeon in Paris, in transplanting glands from one living body to another.

It is necessary at this point to go back to the year 1889, and to the late Dr. Charles Edward Brown-Séquard, then celebrated, now almost forgotten. Dr. Brown-Séquard, born in Mauritius of an American father and a French mother, studied medicine in Paris. In middle life he spent several years in the United States, practising his profession in New York, and serving as professor of physiology at Harvard. Later he returned to Paris and became professor of experimental medicine at the Collège de France. In 1889, at the age of seventy-one, he startled the medical world by announcing that he had found in the glands of sheep a substance which had power to arrest the ravages of old age. He had tried his remedy on himself, he declared, and had been marvelously rejuvenated.

As usually happens in such cases, the conservative and skeptical physicians of the world frowned upon their more brilliant and daring colleague. They called him ugly names, and accused him of trying to make

capital out of a publicity which, as a matter of fact, he had never sought; and five years later he died a broken-hearted man.

It is true that other experimenters were not able to get from Dr. Brown-Séquard's glandular extracts the remarkable results that he described; but there is no doubt that his investigations of the mysterious ductless organs of the body were of great value. A biography prepared by the Smithsonian Institution six years after his death exonerates him of having had any part in the unethical practises which grew out of the exploitation of his elixir, and predicts that time will finally establish his title to fame. He was one of the pioneers in a branch of medicine which is now coming into increasing importance. Indeed, he may be said to have laid the corner-stone of a new structure.

After the death of Dr. Brown-Séquard, an American physician, Dr. Sajous, of Philadelphia, brought forth the fact that such glands as the thyroid, pituitary, gonads, adrenals, and others were intimately associated physiologically. He pointed out that they pour into the blood substances which make a man stupid or dull, bright or alert, thin or fat, happy or miserable, worried or calm, young or old. Little attention was paid to him by the medical profession. One or two who repeated his experiments and confirmed his findings were practically laughed out of court.

THE SOURCES OF OUR VITAL POWERS

Other experimenters, however—as for instance, the laboratory psychologists, Professor William B. Watson, of Johns Hopkins, and Professor Walter B. Cannon, of

Harvard—were gradually accumulating evidence which indicated that growth, feelings, emotions, and intercommunications between living animal tissues are the result of substances released into the blood-stream by these various glands. The more liberal-minded physiologists and physicians began to see that the brain and the nerves are merely swift bridges, wires, and depots through which quick messages are sent from the senses to one another, and to the muscles. The passions, appetites, and sensations—the feelings of life, youth, age, love, anger, hate, grief, sorrow, joy, and exultation—are aroused in and by the internal agents made in the thyroid, pituitary, adrenals, gonads, thymus, pineal, and other glands. The brain and nerves have no more to do with these than they have to do with the shock of an electric eel, or with the impetus toward food characteristic of animals and plants which never had a nerve or a brain.

Physiologists and observant scientists who cared little about selling prescriptions or getting fees for surgical services now began to investigate in earnest and without prejudice. They found that by treatment of the thyroid gland dull-eyed, dwarfed, stupid, backward children, with thick, dry skin, called cretins, could be changed into growing, bright, alert, sensitive boys and girls of the normal kind. These cures are commonplace nowadays.

Under the floor of the brain are two glands—the pituitary body or hypophysis, and the pineal gland. About a dozen years ago a Baltimore physician, Dr. John Turner, published a book in which, reviving a suggestion of Descartes, he sought to prove that the pineal gland is the seat of the soul of man. He was laughed at, but the laughter of the ignorant does not take away from the pineal gland its undoubted power to affect the emotions.

The pituitary gland, when too large and active, causes an abnormal growth which may make its possessor a giant. On the other hand, biologists have made dwarf fish and frogs by injecting an extract of the thyroid gland into the eggs and embryos. In one experiment a group of tadpoles—or pollywogs, as American boys call them—was placed in a vessel filled with water containing a small amount of the extract of the pituitary gland, and another group in a weak solution of thyroid extract. Those in the pituitary liquid grew to an

abnormal size, but remained tadpoles, while those in the other vessel developed in the usual way, but were dwarfed.

FUNCTIONS OF THE THYROID GLAND

The thyroid is a gland of the neck, situated near the Adam's apple. Of all the vascular or ductless glands this has been most fully studied. Practically all that we know of its functions has been learned within the last thirty years, and there are doctors now in practise who remember when some of the leading authorities in Europe and America scoffed at the idea of the strange gland in the neck having any functions at all.

A prominent Baltimore physician recently said that when he was a student one of his teachers, who had just returned from Europe, announced it as a great joke that an anatomist in Zurich had said that the removal of the thyroid would affect the constitution of the patient. The American preceptor regarded the Swiss scientist's idea as a subject for laughter; but to-day we all know that a man without a thyroid, or with a stunted or improperly developed thyroid, is likely to be a sorry specimen of humanity.

In his recent work, "The Endocrane Organ," Sir Edward Schafer, professor of physiology in Edinburgh University, points to the close relationship that exists between the size and structure of the thyroid and its possessor's general state of nutrition. The functions of the gland were first investigated by removing it in certain animals and watching the results. Dr. Sutherland Simpson took under observation two lambs two months old, and took the thyroid from one of them. A year later the two animals were photographed—the one deprived of its thyroid being a shriveled dwarf, one-third of the normal size, the other a well-developed sheep.

Availing themselves of this negative information, physicians began to treat the dwarfed and ill-developed child, the so-called cretin, verging toward idiocy because his thyroid gland was undeveloped. They took the glandular substance from slaughtered animals and administered it in the form of liquid extracts or pills. In some cases the effect was so beneficial as to be almost magical. Several months' treatment converted the half-idiotic cretin, with hanging mouth and lack-luster eye, into a bright and healthy child.

There are to-day men who, to all appearance, at least, are thoroughly well and strong, but who, without the thyroid treatment, would have been chattering, shambling imbeciles. It is true, however, that in many cases the cures are not final and complete, for the patients need to be constantly dosed with the stimulating preparation, or at least to be carefully watched, so that the physician may be ready to intervene whenever he judges that the balance is beginning to waver.

On the other hand, a hypertrophied or unduly active thyroid is also a source of serious physical and emotional disturbances. Among the symptoms that it may produce are trembling of the hands, bulging of the eyes, weakness of the knees, shortness of the breath, palpitation of the heart, and excessive perspiration. It may make its possessor subject to panic fears and fits of depression.

THE THYMUS AND OTHER GLANDS

The thymus gland occupies a space in the neck below the thyroid, extending down to the chest. Our knowledge of it is far from complete, but it is essentially an organ of early life, and the secretion that it manufactures seems to be closely connected with a child's growth and development. For two or three years after birth it increases in size; then it remains stationary until about the twelfth year, after which it begins to atrophy. In medicine it has been used in the treatment of malnutrition, rickets, and delayed growth.

The adrenal glands—also known as the suprarenal bodies or capsules—are small, yellowish crescents situated at the upper end of each kidney. They are regarded as a latent source of energy, and seem to be specially active in secreting a stimulating fluid when some unusual physical exertion is required. Extracts made from their substance, known by such names as adrenalin and suprarenin, are used for various purposes, but particularly as a hemostatic in eye, nose, and throat surgery.

The gonads, or sex glands, are undoubtedly of prime importance in the physical and mental make-up of the individual. They are concerned with love, passion, jealousy, and hatred, with contentment and happiness, with muscular activity and courage. I have already mentioned the fact that they were the subject of Dr. Brown-Séquard's experiments, and I will now speak

of the recent revival of his ideas by Dr. Serge Voronoff.

DR. SERGE VORONOFF'S EXPERIMENTS

It must be premised that Dr. Voronoff's methods were evidently based on the pioneer work of several other skilful surgeons. One of these was Professor William S. Halsted, professor of surgery at Johns Hopkins, who several years ago demonstrated the possibility of transplanting glands and keeping them alive in their new surroundings. Then came the remarkable experiments of Dr. Alexis Carrel, of the Rockefeller Institute, New York, who showed that new arteries and veins could be built, and that blood-vessels could be sewed to kidneys, glands, and other structures of the living body.

Thus was the stage set for the appearance of some new and brilliant performer—who has now appeared in the person of Dr. Voronoff. We are assured that this Russian surgeon has removed the gonads from young sheep and transplanted them into the bodies of aged men. Not merely were the borrowed glands embedded beneath the skin, but the arteries and veins attached to them were carefully sewed end to end with the corresponding vessels of the patient's circulatory system, so that the implanted tissue at once began to receive nourishment.

Dr. Voronoff's report of the results of his experiments, as presented to the French Academy of Medicine, was dramatic and revolutionary. If we can accept it without reserve, he restored the youth of his patients almost as magically as *Mephistopheles*, in "Faust," transformed the bent and world-weary student into a dashing and adventurous young gallant.

Perhaps it would be too much to expect such a rejuvenation to be as lasting as it was sensational. It may be oversanguine to hope that Dr. Voronoff has found what Ponce de Leon, Descartes, Swedenborg, and many another sought in vain. It may surely be said, however, that he has made the quest of an elixir of youth much less of a rainbow-chase, and much more of a serious scientific undertaking, than it has ever been before. Now that practical and skilful men are on the trail, the skeptics and scoffers who drove Brown-Séquard to death with a broken heart had better be on their guard.

Of course, the path of the pioneer in such matters is no easy one, and there have been some lamentable fiascoes in the past.

The memory of such incidents causes conservative medical men to withhold final judgment until the Russian savant's work has stood the test of time; but it is safe to say that a revolution in the accepted principles of hygiene and methods of treating disease may be at hand, as the result of just such investigations and experiments as those of Dr. Voronoff.

It may be of interest to quote the opinions of some prominent American doctors who have commented on the work of the Russian surgeon. Dr. Joseph Fraenkel, formerly professor of nervous diseases in the medical school of Cornell University, expressed the view that while the public might prefer to take Dr. Voronoff's statements with a grain of Attic salt until careful investigation had been made, the attention which had been focused on the ductless glands was in itself very useful. He added:

The human race has always had an instinctive realization of the importance of the ductless gland, although it has lacked complete information. From time immemorial even savage races have sensed something of this. The cannibal eats his enemies, because he believes that by so doing he may gain something of the qualities of a brave foe. Some believe that if one would have courage he must feed upon the heart of a lion.

The Chinese, whose medicine we of the West call empirical, have had many of these ideas regarding the medicinal qualities of the glands of the body. There is an old belief that by feeding upon these glands, or by using extracts made from them, certain qualities might be obtained. There is therefore nothing new in principle in the treatment proposed by Dr. Voronoff. He introduces the gland into the system in the belief that it will continue its function and contribute its secretion to the blood.

That the power of these ductless glands was appreciated in other centuries we well know. Descartes was ridiculed because in his old age he had said that the pineal gland was the seat of the soul. Swedenborg wrote many pages about the glands of the human body, and understood many of their functions.

Dr. Frank Henry Pike, associate professor of physiology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, questioned whether Dr. Voronoff's patients received any lasting benefit, and added:

As a physiologist, I should expect to consider the most exhaustive tests before passing on any matter of this kind. We should have to know whether more food was assimilated under the treatment, and whether a greater supply of oxygen was introduced into the system. The effort of an aged man to assimilate the foreign tissue would be a considerable one.

An equally skeptical opinion was expressed by Dr. Ernest Ellsworth Smith,

president of the New York Academy of Sciences, who further suggested:

In this connection, the matter of psychology must not be forgotten, for doubtless the telling an aged man of the effects expected from such treatment would tend to stimulate him considerably for a time.

All these questions and qualifications, however, do not obscure the importance and interest of Dr. Voronoff's experiments, even though it may be—and probably is—too soon to accept them as assured successes.

LIFE A SERIES OF CHEMICAL REACTIONS

If the motive forces of the human body are of chemical origin, as some of the advanced thinkers in the realm of science maintain, then our daily life is a series of chemical reactions. When our various chemical constituents are functioning properly, we are well; when there is a disturbance in the laboratory of the body, caused by some inharmonious combination, we call in a physician, who seeks to restore the normal balance by prescribing a dose of medicine. His remedial agent may be a drug obtained from the vegetable or mineral world, or a serum or vaccine drawn from the body of some living creature.

Now it appears more and more that the human body has its own well-equipped laboratories or drug-stores, where it manufactures home remedies of wonderful power. Through these laboratories—the ductless glands—it can call into use fluids which generate energy or act as correctives to abnormal tendencies. The chemicals thus originated are tiny but powerful agents which are immediately dissolved in the blood, to be carried by it to all parts of the body.

Too many books and too many professors still attribute to the nerves and the brain the powers that really belong to these various glands. The medical instruction that force and will come from the brain and nerves is now known to be false, but it is hard to overtake and conquer errors taught by a hundred thousand doctors still banking on what they learned in a less enlightened period.

If man is ever to gain the power to renew his youth like the eagle, the secret will probably be found by studying these strange reservoirs, devoid of any apparent outlet, which are such potent factors in giving us our different and individual constitutions.

A Drama in Dust

BY HERMAN GEORGE SCHEFFAUER

Illustrated by H. T. Fisk

WHEN old Selvin, the actor, was dismissed from the hospital, the embers of fever were still in him. All that afternoon he drifted aimlessly about, a white, frail phantom in the tempestuous traffic of the street. With his long, silvery hair, his smooth-shaven, ascetic face, his delicate, transparent hands, he resembled a saint carved out of ebony and withered ivory. His large, dark eyes were as brilliant as wet jewels, and moved restlessly in the pallid mask of his face. They stared beyond the actual, projecting their own visions, and refused to let the gross world enter in.

All the city went by him in a blur—a moving, hurrying procession of lurching houses and flickering forms, dim, gray, and swift, that wove a dreary patter of mock life—like a cloud of gnats in the air.

As he passed a doorway, a man with a physician's case in his hand came storming out and knocked him down. Observing the helplessness of the old man, and the dazed look in his eyes, the stranger helped him into his office and ordered his housekeeper to pour him a large glass of port.

"And give him something to eat, too," he added as he hurried out.

The housekeeper brought the old actor a goblet of port and a thick, double slab of bread and Swiss cheese. Selvin drank the fiery port, then plucked at the sandwich. Presently he slipped it furtively into his pocket, and with a melancholy courtesy bade the prim, elderly woman good day.

Strange lights began to flash into the old actor's brain as he shuffled along the street. The port rang through his head like a bell, a tocsin arousing ghostly slumberers. Once more he began his aimless wanderings. Goal he had none—none that he knew.

Then, suddenly, he found himself standing in front of the boarded-up entrance of the old Thalia Theater. He stood near the

curb, rocking slightly upon his long legs, like a silver poplar in a wind. The theater was like an old friend to him, its face a familiar thing, a warm memory in an indifferent world. It was his goal. Hither his destiny had driven him. The hidden but vigilant steersman in his soul had brought him to this ancient harbor of half-remembered things.

In an instant the obscure muddle of street life was wiped away as by a sheet of lightning. Selvin's own world knew resurrection, and descended upon him with great wings outspread, and lifted him into a region of singing suns. Some homing instinct had lived on in him, undestroyed by the years, by poverty, by fever, and it had guided the shattered body and the uneasy spirit to this spot. The years broke down like a rotten dam, and the past foamed and leaped about him in a flood.

The entrance to the Thalia was walled up with blank, painted boards. In the center there was a little door with a rusty padlock. The wooden wall had been there for twenty years, begrimed, scribbled over with countless names, and hacked with knives. Where the boards and the pavement met there was dust thick enough to nourish a few spears of grass. The many-armed iron gasoliers, once bright with milky globes but leprous now with rust, extended their skeleton shapes on both sides of the arch.

The huge and stately old theater stood sealed and forlorn in a sordid quarter of the town. The gloomy brick warrens of the poor sprawled and crowded about it. Pestiferous chimneys smoked against its Palladian front and smooth-cemented side-walls. Between the stone acanthus-leaves of its Corinthian capitals hung straw where pigeons had built their nests. Torn advertisements defaced its pilasters; its windows had become opaque as sheets of lead.

The dreadful march of the slums had engulfed and dispossessed the once magnificent playhouse. The estate had lain in the limbo of chancery for many years. The theater was now only a tomb, a forgotten monument, a mere presence in the region's uproar. Like some shabby old aristocrat with a gay and brilliant youth, it stood here aloof from splendor, but not yet surrendered wholly unto squalor.

On one side a four-story building of sooty brick pushed insolently against it, its front wreathed with drifts of steam that came swirling up from a cheap restaurant on the ground floor. On the other side there was a drug-store with two enormous jars of red and green waters in the dusty window. A cloak manufactory occupied the upper floor, where girls and women sat all day at humming and roaring sewing-machines. A narrow passage down a flight of steps led to the rear of the theater.

The pavements now became rushing rivers of humanity that shot and swirled past the old tragedian. Newsboys were yelling out the deeds of the day. Past him who had neither home nor work, the people were streaming home from their labor; but old Selvin, walking like one in fey, went unharmed through the human torrents toward the dusky little alleyway.

He descended the steps, then waded through a litter of orange-skins and derelict newspapers. At the farther end of the passage he came upon a rusty iron gate which was carelessly fastened with a piece of frayed rope. Painfully, mechanically, his long white fingers unwrapped the rope. He passed through and closed the gate.

Then, descending into a desolate area, he stood before a door. One of the lower panels was split vertically in twain, and a strip was missing in the center. He recalled the night, more than twenty years ago, when Lenford, the comedian, had kicked the door in his rage. It seemed to him as if it had been only last night.

He slid one-half of the panel aside, inserted his hand, and pulled at something within. After several violent tugs there was the sound of a rusted bolt starting from its sockets. He pushed open the creaking door, and closed it again. The bolt grated into its mortise.

II

THE solid, dank-smelling night engulfed Selvin, but he knew his way. Down steps

he went, and up steps, under the stage, past the dressing-rooms, feeling the walls, his footfalls padded by the thick dust—whereunto was added the silent, ceaseless invasion of motes that filtered in from the hideous outer world like a thin, sepulchral vapor which nature wove and cast down like a veil over the works of man.

Hanging spiders' webs draped themselves across his face and clothes. The air was stagnant with the must of age, the exhalation of dead, forgotten things entombed in darkness and silence, impotent to protest save by smell; but now the silence, shaken into waves by the beating of one human heart, began to stir like a sea. It seemed to expand and contract like a black, elastic immensity holding within it a sound that vibrated high above the compass of the ear, like the humming of the world in flight.

Suddenly Selvin ran his head against a wall. Crimson meteors, explosive stars, and convulsive spirals of fire whipped and sailed before his inner vision. The stage door must be higher up. Here it was!

His groping feet took hold on the slight, familiar slant of the boards under their carpet of dust. By some subtle sense, by the reflexes of the sensitive nerves of his face, he knew that the vast black mouth of the auditorium yawned before him. This cold, vaulted hollow of the dark he remembered as a firmament banded with splendor, palpitating with warm human bodies, studded with stars of jewels and of human eyes, and thronged with the faces of thrilled multitudes seen wanly in the reflected glow from the stage. Six thousand eyes had been fixed in ecstasy upon himself. High up, this coal-black universe was pierced by a faint, glimmering rapier of light from a crack in the shutters of the skylight.

Old Selvin's feet, disciplined to the measurements of the huge stage, brought him faithfully to the center. Here he stood still for a long time, swaying to and fro, as the visions crowded in upon him. Then, as if suddenly conscious of the darkness, he drew a match and struck it. Its crackle went off like rifle-fire.

The tiny flame, like a little brush of fire, painted forth huge, dim shapes and outlines and cavernous hollows of dark against a deeper dark. It revealed the ragged fringes of the flies hanging down like enormous sheets of limp, torn paper. The great, patient, half-naked caryatids of the

boxes sprang to sudden life; the long sweep of the footlight ramp declared its noble bend. That bourn between the real and the unreal world of the theater asserted its ancient fiat as its curve was delivered from the night.

The serried rows of seats stood marshaled in regular files like the blank faces of a surprised regiment. The towering pilasters of the proscenium arch, spotted and leprous with mold and crumbling plaster, soared to the shadowy heights where their capitals spread exfoliate, like lifeless palms. Vague and ghostly, the receding arcs of the terraced balconies and gallery proclaimed their presence. The enormous, old-fashioned crystal luster with gas-jets which hung in the center of the great void, like a congealed constellation draped with funeral festoons of cobwebs, awoke from sleep and winked with a thousand dust-lidded eyes. At the back of the pit an oval glass panel in a baize-covered door gleamed dully in answer to the match.

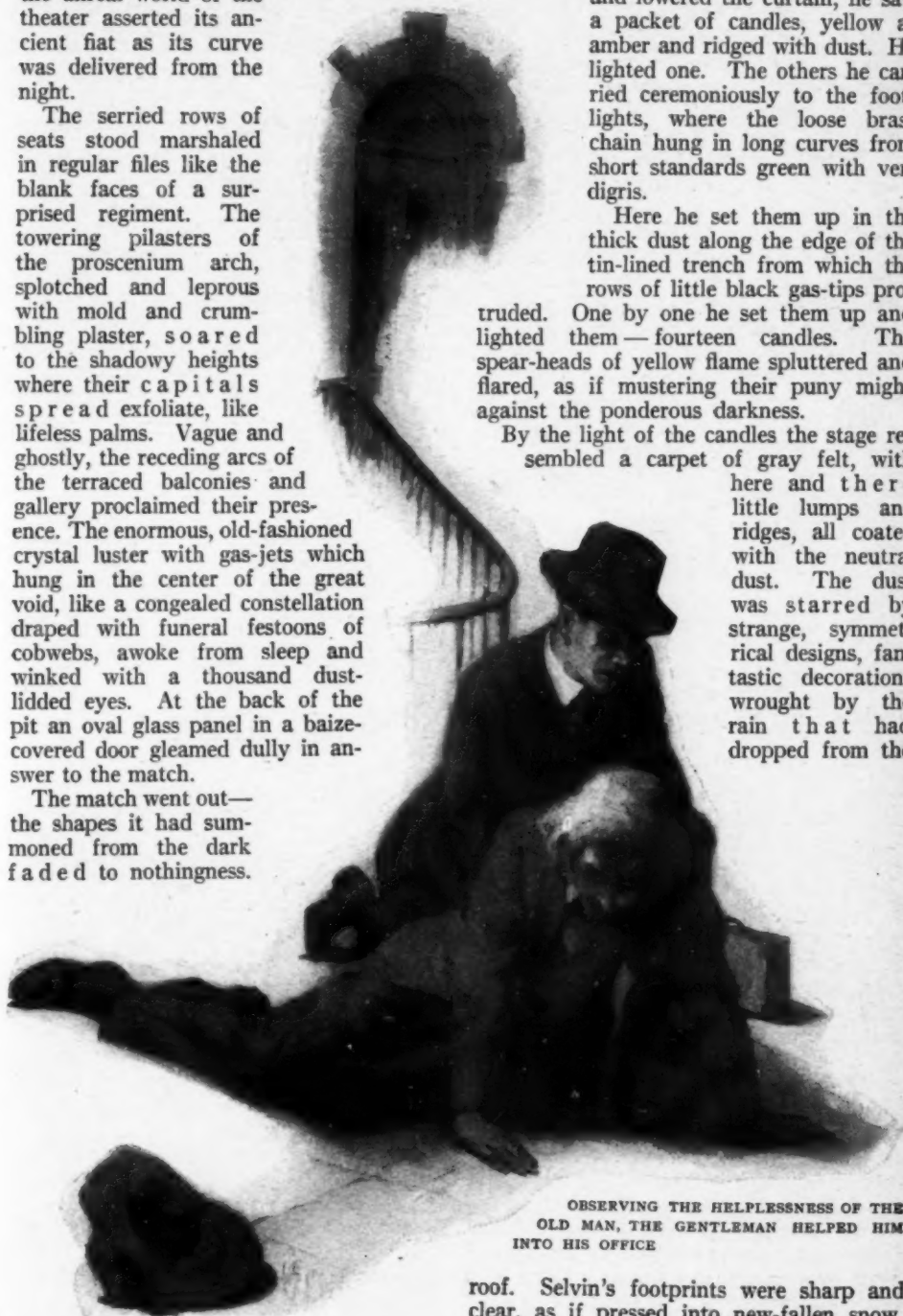
The match went out—the shapes it had summoned from the dark faded to nothingness.

Selvin moved toward the flies and struck another match. On a cross-beam in the partition wall, near the ropes that raised and lowered the curtain, he saw a packet of candles, yellow as amber and ridged with dust. He lighted one. The others he carried ceremoniously to the footlights, where the loose brass chain hung in long curves from short standards green with verdigris.

Here he set them up in the thick dust along the edge of the tin-lined trench from which the rows of little black gas-tips protruded. One by one he set them up and lighted them—fourteen candles. The spear-heads of yellow flame spluttered and flared, as if mustering their puny might against the ponderous darkness.

By the light of the candles the stage resembled a carpet of gray felt, with

here and there little lumps and ridges, all coated with the neutral dust. The dust was starred by strange, symmetrical designs, fantastic decorations wrought by the rain that had dropped from the



OBSERVING THE HELPLESSNESS OF THE OLD MAN, THE GENTLEMAN HELPED HIM INTO HIS OFFICE

roof. Selvin's footprints were sharp and clear, as if pressed into new-fallen snow.

There were many little circling tracks, with sharply indented points, as of claws—hieroglyphics of strange exploration and adventure in this gray wilderness.

Selvin stood in the center of the stage, clapped his hands, and gave a shout. The silence ripped asunder like an immense expanse of canvas, the echoes ran and yelled, charged into long inviolate corners, recoiled, and then perished in a tremolo in the gallery. That hollow world of dust and stagnation was rudely disturbed, and rebelled faintly.

Old Selvin took his candle and went toward the dressing-room he used to occupy. Every movement he made was full of studied grace, every step stately and deliberate. He made his exit with great ceremony. The fourteen candles winked their eyes and burned on in the vast, expectant hush.

After a few moments he stalked tragically from the wings. A casque of tarnished steel now covered his white hair; a rusted sword was in his hand. He had found these things in the litter of the old property-room. The fourteen candles brightened as if to applaud his entrance. They burned gallantly, these white pickets on the outposts of the great unknown that lowered before their fence of flaming javelins. Around each there was a luminous globe, like the nimbus of a saint. Their mellow glow, struggling through the usurping darkness, wrought strange and wonderful sculptures.

The massive caryatids of the lower boxes bore satyrs' heads whose faces of dull bronze, spotted with touches of silver dust, leered at the placid nymphs on either side of the elliptical arches. The keystone in the center of the arches bore a head of Minerva, whose blank eyeballs glared austere at the laureled head of Apollo on the opposite box. Two naked, blowzy cupids, perched on the edge of the cornices with cumbrous garlands in their hands, twinkled their eyes.

The light strove forward wave by wave, and drew from the night the rows of gilded masks which ran along the lower edges of the four balconies. The comic masks with their slitlike eyes grinned and drew their deeply indented mouths upward and backward in a sardonic rigor. The tragic masks, tearful and lugubrious, depressed their mouths to dreadful angles and showed great eyes that were as caverns filled with brooding horror.

The great crystal chandelier now glinted duskily, and its long pennons of cobwebs drifted in lazy currents of air. In the top-most boxes and in the murky corners of the galleries crouched sinister shadows and indistinguishable shapes with huge, mysterious wings.

III

ALL that had been left unshrouded by two and a half decades of dust and decay now battled to reclaim its form from chaos. Every gilded molding, every metal knob on sconce or luster, every clear inch of glass, awoke, captured the tiny flames, and tried to send forth a gleam. A myriad blinking eyes, inscrutable with the tragedy of outworn things, stared from death and sleep at this little pageant of sudden life.

They watched the old, forgotten actor in his gilded frame, a small, dim, fantastic figure stalking behind his barrier of tapers, his shadow leaping and lurching across the faded drop-scenes and the tattered side-pieces. Overhead hung the outlined boughs and branches of a forest roof, now woven by the spiders into a forlorn jungle of rotting canvas, from which ropes hung down like black, lethargic serpents.

The vast playhouse swarmed with presences, as if all its sequestered spirits and essences had suddenly been released. There were emanations that seemed to crowd forward, captive music that streamed from the pillars, the walls, and the moldy upholstery, echoes of life that were imprisoned many years ago when all this vast emptiness vibrated and surged with sound.

Old Selvin stood motionless, leaning upon his sword and staring with weak eyes into the auditorium. There was an audience there, eager, expectant, friendly. He saw it distinctly, and heard the beating of its multitudinous heart. He felt the intense contact, the electric sympathy that was established between itself and him, as of old. The white ovals of the men's shirt-fronts glimmered out of the dusk, and the white triangles of the women's bosoms. The pale, warm flesh sang out of the silk and satin that infolded it.

From this audience there streamed a will, a desire, a command that forced him to act. He made a few strutting steps, and then threw himself into an attitude. He gripped and swung his sword; but he had forgotten his cue. A babble of incoherent words poured from him, detached phrases

and lines from his favorite parts—*Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*.

His eye caught a glimpse of the drop-scene at his back. Ha! It was *Macbeth* that he was acting—the drop-scene showed the blasted heath, ominous, desolate, sinister with doom, stretching endlessly to a bleak, leaden horizon-line, above which hung bars of iron clouds like a prison grating.

The lines came fluently now. The old man's golden, sonorous voice rolled and vibrated in the emptiness like the triumphant peal of an organ. His sick eyes flashed with liberated fire, his gestures became abrupt and violent. Horror and defiance swept across his face, his voice rose to its fullest compass.

He gave no heed to the responses, for these were instantly completed to his inner ear. Then, slowly and solemnly, he gave the fatalistic speech that begins with the rolling cadences of "to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow—"

He strutted and fretted his few moments upon the stage. It was a tale full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. From an obscure corner of the vaulted ceiling came a tremulous echo:

"Nothing!"

Then memory abandoned the part and ran into the groove of another rôle. *Lear* sprang up and absorbed *Macbeth*.

The delirious and fantastic prompter in the old tragedian's brain subdued the voice, the bearing, the personality of the man to the new character. Selvin became the mad king stumbling over the naked moor, defying the storm, defying his daughters. The feeble quaver, the frenzied desperation of the royal dotard fell upon him; he bowed his head and rounded his shoulders and took off the iron casque. The years snowed down upon his white hair.

Back and forth he raged, his weakened body miraculously reinforced, the emotional storm within him shaking his stricken frame like a shell. The potent wine of the immortal tragedy filled him. All about him the wild elements were whipping the world like a top. He heard the thunder bellowing in the wings, and saw the vicious spurt of the artificial lightning.

"Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! Spout, rain! Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters!"

Next the resonant voice sank into an even, yet poignant monotone, vibrating in

the fathomless grief and pathos of *Othello's* last speech. The sound of his own voice brought tears to the old man's eyes—this passage had always made him weep. For a moment he halted; then he went on:

"And say besides that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by the throat the circumcized dog
And smote him thus!"

He struck himself upon the left breast with his clenched hand as with a dagger, then reeled and fell—as he had fallen hundreds of times. His ears were filled with a roaring. The audience was like a forest in a storm. Thousands of hands were beating forth salvos of applause. It was time to rise; he must step before the curtain and make his bow. Painfully and with great effort, clawing in the dust, he forced himself to his feet.

The curtain had not fallen! For all that he stepped to the footlights and bowed to all the four levels of the theater. Then, with his profoundest bow and sweetest smile, he did honor to the box upon the right. It was there that she had always sat—the woman he had loved—Eugénie, a second-rate tragedienne whom he had glorified into a second Bernhardt. He saw her now, her black eyes shining from the obscurity of the box, behind the heavy velvet hangings.

IV

THE satyrs, crouched beneath their eternal burden of the upper boxes, leered from their masks of dust at the nymphs upon the center panels. On Minerva's features, lighted from below, lingered the same austere and wintry smile. The cherubs, with their pudgy, upraised arms, seemed petrified in the act of applauding. The comic masks grinned with wide mouths, the tragic gasped in pain. The gigantic luster tinkled and stirred with its pendants and beads of cut glass, as if it longed to hurl itself to the floor in one sacrificial crash of praise.

Selvin saw his audience plainly—the sea of human faces and fluttering hands in the half light. To the right sat Eugénie. Her great eyes, bright with pride in him, burned out of the darkness—black eyes, impenetrable, streaming with light.

But something had gone wrong. The stage-hands were not attending to their business. The curtain had not fallen!



THE OLD MAN'S GOLDEN, SONOROUS VOICE ROLLED AND VIBRATED IN THE EMPTINESS LIKE A TRIUMPHANT ORGAN. HIS SICK EYES FLASHED WITH LIBERATED FIRE. HIS GESTURES BECAME ABRUPT AND VIOLENT

He tottered toward the wings and tugged at the coarse and hairy ropes looped about an iron stanchion. He succeeded in unwinding the ropes with his thin fingers, then braced himself to withstand the drag of the immense curtain and the thick wooden pole; but the curtain, so long unused, slept immovably in its rusted guides. He left the ropes dangling.

His tongue felt parched, his throat raw with the strain and the dust. His brain was leaping in a witch-dance, and the theater swam before his eyes. The guttering candles went up and down and to and fro, and arranged themselves in arcs and circles, ellipses and fantastic curves, like a torchlight procession. The under surfaces of the rococo sculpture, with its volutes, shells, and cartouches, shone with a tawny glow.

Old Selvin felt some lumpy object bulging in the pocket of his threadbare coat. Mechanically he drew it forth and gazed at it with unseeing eyes. It was the sandwich of cheese and bread which the doctor's housekeeper had given him. It fell from his fingers to the floor.

Within his brain the tyrant fever was enacting strange fantasies, and whispering many suggestions. Pageants of color and light swept by. There was music and much movement.

Then Selvin suddenly found himself on the other side of the footlights—in the auditorium. He sank into one of the orchestra stalls. The seat groaned and creaked, and the sluggish dust rebelled in a stifling cloud. His dark, vision-haunted eyes shone with a tumultuous light. He stared at the fourteen candles, at the dim, gray masses of the blasted heath upon the back-drop. Eugénie had gone from her box, but that was quite natural. She had gone to enact her own part, and he had come this evening to see her act. At his back he felt the swarming and shifting multitude.

The fourteen candles had burned to low stumps and gathered beards of wax. The flames cringed and pirouetted to the invisible actors of the new drama. Old Selvin, oblivious to the surrounding desolation, sat rapt in the bright illusion of his senses. He sat like a god who created life out of nothing, out of drifting shadows in the murky void of the empty stage.

There were little furtive squeaks as of violins being tuned and keys tightened. Then out of the abyss where the orchestra

lay rose the black form of Scherbart, the conductor. The pointed beard he wore and the two upstanding curls of his hair gave his silhouette a satanic look. He swung his baton, like a magician making cabalistic signs.

Strange melodies began to whirl and eddy up from the black profounds below the stage. A storm of notes went whirling up and then descended as in a rain. The theater seemed full of tiny, struggling shapes of black that swarmed everywhere like clouds of droning insects. It was a music of the deeps foaming toward the heights, a rushing fountain of wild harmonies, flinging itself toward the stars, then falling in showers upon the world.

Scherbart's form, black and shadowy, stood at the conductor's desk. His arms waved wildly and led the music with demoniacal energy. A star was fastened to the end of his baton—a star which winked and flickered madly through the dusk—the great and costly diamond that a Russian princess had given Scherbart at the zenith of his fame.

With swift and swooping movements the conductor was fetching up tremendous strains from mysterious abysses underfoot. Unearthly melodies stormed about the candles, threatening, buffeting the flames—wailing in the violins, growling in the drums, crying in the agonized brass and silver, shrieking in flute and clarinet—shrieking clear and loud—shrieking like a human thing—like Eugénie!

Into the lighted field Selvin saw her sweep—Eugénie, her face white as chalk, with two round red spots upon her cheeks, her hair in ebony ringlets, bare-armed, with massive bracelets. She was panting; her bosom rose and fell. Her dress was like a cloud of phosphorescent lace. She was acting *Marguerite* in "*La Dame aux Camélias*" to-night. He always loved to see her in this part. Often he had lived through all the poignant emotion and jealousy aroused by her simulated passion, all the strain of her torture, the agony of her end—always feeding his soul with the proud thought that in life she was his.

So it was now. These two thousand human beings about and above his orchestra seat thought she was *Armand's*. Stupid dolts, to fancy that effeminate Frenchman could ever be her lover! Delicious, almost ecstatic, were his sensations at such times—a feast of intense and varying emotions.

It was thus that he saw her again tonight. Her eyes sought his through the sheeted glow of the footlights, through the gusts of spectral music, through the mingled light and darkness.

Now she advanced upon him, floating like a cloud impregnated with light, so that he stretched out his hands to embrace her. Then she was whisked back into overwhelming distances until the stage appeared as if he were looking at it through the wrong end of opera-glasses. A candle-flame gave a convulsive leap and went out, sending up a thin trail of smoke.

And now Eugénie lay dying on the stage—her life flickering out like the thirteen remaining candle-flames. It was he who knelt beside her in that shuddering twilight, and not the cowardly *Armand*. She was dying.

Abruptly the vision leaped from the memory of the play to the memory of reality. He saw himself kneeling beside her bed, and she was in truth dying, in a miserable room in Harlem, where a few candles were burning and children howled outside in the streets. It was thus that she had died—in his arms. He felt that he must turn and shout it aloud to the people in the theater who had flung down their gold and silver to see her die upon the stage.

"I loved her! She was mine to the last! You could not take her from me!"

It grew darker and still darker. A second candle went out with a splutter. Another flung its flame desperately aloft and died, then still another. Now there were but ten burning, and soon but seven.

V

THE satyrs smiled diabolically at the expiring lights, like evil gods at perishing suns. Minerva, the all-wise, the ever-patient, gazed with vacant eyes at the pitiful array of defiant flames. The fat, tarnished cupids, perched on the pediments, no longer cast shadows against the vaulted ceiling, which began to descend like a cloud. The crystal luster, multiplying the six candle-flames a thousandfold, was preparing to bid farewell to its brief glory.

Then, to old Selvin's eyes, the pilaster of the proscenium moved to right and left with a stately, deliberate sweep, and the arch lifted itself to meet the misty ceiling. The stage became colossal. The actors were lost within it. They were like shadows crawling about on an immense plain,

like travelers in a desert, like flies upon a table. And in the center of this immensity he saw the white form of Eugénie lying upon the couch and a dark figure weeping beside her. This figure raised its head and—looked at him with his own face.

Again the violins squeaked sharply. Scherbart had vanished.

Then from the wings, in the light of the five candles, advanced old, old men with bowed backs and humps and long gray whiskers and sharp noses—one, two, three, four, five of them, circling in procession. Their hunched-up shadows fled and scattered across the drop-scene. They vanished into the solid murk, then made their entrances again and crept ever closer to the four candles. Then they rushed swiftly in great circles over the immense plateau and gibbered and squeaked, squeaked and gibbered, like the sheeted dead in the Roman streets. Their black eyes glittered like tiny metal points as they came tripping past the three lights.

The little gray men danced and bobbed upon the stage in the light of the candles whose flare still fought with the giants of the dark. Then, forming a band, they rushed suddenly upon the white shape of Eugénie lying still and dead. Old Selvin saw these shrouded mutes, these tiny gray Capuchins about to bear away his beloved out of his sight, out of his life forever. He struggled to his feet and stretched out his arms as if to thwart this final robbery.

"No! No!" came his tragic cry. "Eugénie!"

His voice ended in a hoarse whisper, and then a gasp. He fell back in his seat, and his head sank forward on his chest. The one remaining candle flung its faltering light upon his head.

The rats, squeaking and tugging at the bread and cheese, scampered away. There came a mighty rushing sound, as of vast wings beating in the void. The curtain, freeing itself by its own weight, came shuddering down like an immense sail, flaunting its tatters. It fell with a great wind, in a hurricane of dust and a muffled thunder of the heavy pole against the floor.

The draft puffed out the last struggling light. The dust flung itself abroad, filling all the air with the incense of evanescence. Then slowly and thickly it settled down, and ere long the gleaming silver of old Selvin's motionless head, fallen forward as he sat in the stalls, was gray like all the rest.

The Last Straw*

THE WINNING OF A GOOD WOMAN IN THE BAD LANDS

By Harold Titus

Author of "I Conquered," "Bruce of the Circle A," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LEE CONREY

XXIII

IT looked like trouble, and there was trouble. Beck, with Curtis, Azariah Beal, and two of the ranch-hands, preceded Jane to the Hole at dawn. When she rode down the trail she saw them on their horses, forming a little group well away from the nester's cabin. Her cattle were there, and the fenced area was fringed with them as they moved back and forth, sniffing at the water. They needed it badly, but, though it was just on the other side of the wire strands, it might as well have been a hundred miles away. Inside the fence grazed Cole's herd, with plenty to eat and drink.

Tom's face was troubled as he rode to meet the girl.

"It's serious," he said. "There's enough of your stock down here to ruin you, ma'am, unless we get 'em out to water."

"Let's take them out, then."

He shook his head skeptically.

"They're in bad shape. They're crazy wild, and we haven't got enough men here to shove 'em up the trail. It's an awful job even with quiet cattle, because they have to go in single file, and there's no drivin' 'em. I don't dare risk taking these through the gap and around to water the other way. Why, Jane, that's forty miles! It'll be another day before we can get the boys back to help get 'em out, and it looks like a heavy loss at best, unless we get water. There's only one way to get it, and that's to persuade Cole or his daughter that we'd ought to have it."

"They must have water!" she cried. "It's inhuman not to give it to them."

She watched a big steer going past at a rapid walk, his eyes bright and protruding as in fright; he hoarsely voiced his thirst. "Why, Tom, people can't refuse water to beasts that need it. See, there's Cole and Bobby now"—pointing toward the cabin. "Come, I'll buy water if necessary."

She spurred her horse, and Beck followed at a gallop. When he came abreast of her, he looked curiously at her face. Her jaw was tight and her eyes dark with determination. This was her fight, and she was thoroughly aroused to it. She asked no advice, she showed no hesitation; she went forward with all confidence, certain that in this cause, which involved not only the loss of property, but the suffering of dumb creatures, she could have her way.

A hundred yards from the cabin a steer thrust his head through the wire strands and pushed against them, heedless of cuts, tantalized by the smell of water. Cole shouted with his weak voice and ran toward the animal, brandishing his cudgel.

Bobby stood in front of the cabin, watching the riders' approach.

"I've come to see you again," Jane said. "This time it is an urgent matter." She dismounted and faced the other girl. "My cattle are here, and they need drink very badly. You have all the water. Will you let them through your fence? As soon as they can be moved, we will take them out, and they will bother you no more."

Bobby eyed her with loathing, but there was a change since their previous encounter, for about her manner was something more concrete, as if she cherished a definite grudge this time.

"Is your memory so bad that you don't recollect what I told you before?" she asked

slowly. "I told you once to keep away from us; I tell you that again. This is our range now; your stock ain't got any rights here."

"I'll grant you that I have no right to ask. I did what I could to keep my cattle out of here, but the man I set to guard the gap was shot down. That is why they are here this morning; that is why I must have your water, because it is the only water

available. I am willing to pay. This means very much to me. Won't you name a price for water? I am asking it as a favor, and am willing to pay for it."

"Favor!" The girl shot the word out harshly. "Favor! You're a sweet one to come askin' *me* for a favor!" A fever of rage rose in her face, and her brows gathered threateningly. "Nothin' we've got is for sale to you. I wouldn't help you if I could save your outfit by liftin' my hand, an' if I was starvin' for what you'd give me in pay!"

Jane was nonplused. Bobby's breast rose and fell, and her white teeth gleamed behind drawn lips. She was a catamount, ready to fight.

"But think of these cattle! They're suffering—"

"Cattle! You ask me to think of cattle because they're suffering, an' you'd make human beings suffer from worse things than thirst!"

"I don't understand you. What have I done to make people suffer?"

"I s'pose you don't know?"—jeeringly. "I s'pose you don't *want* to know in front of him"—with a flirt of her quirt to indicate Beck. "I wouldn't either, if I was in your place, you—sneak!"

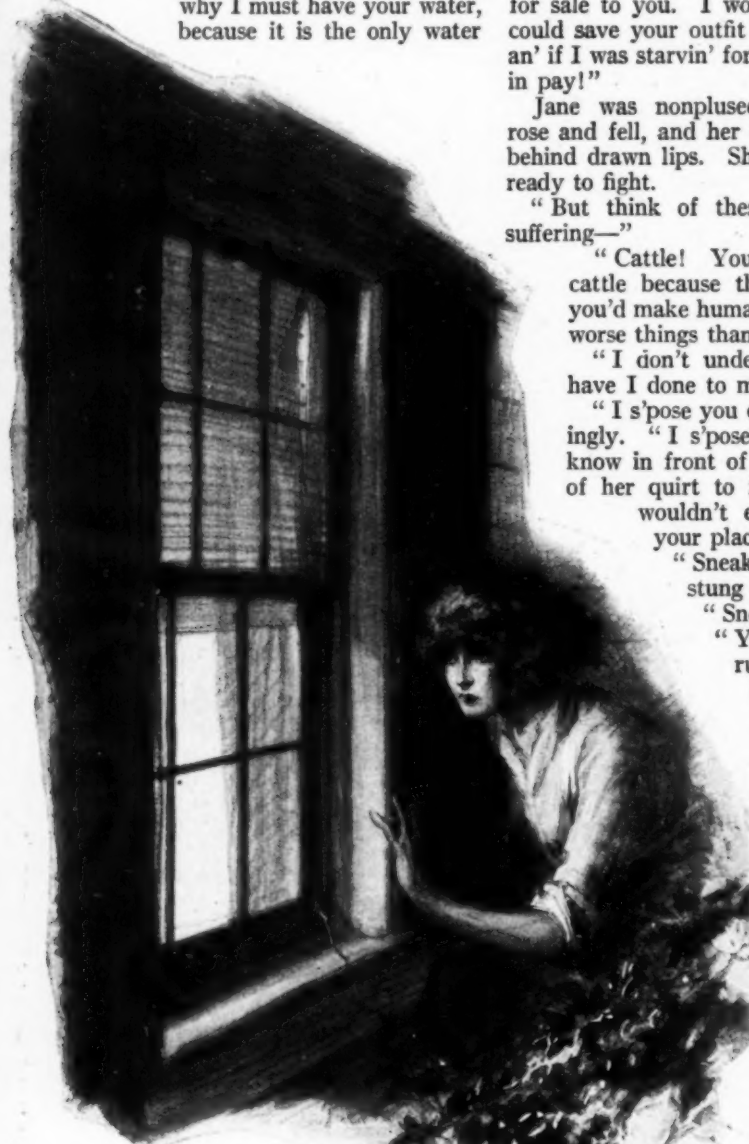
"Sneak?" Jane repeated, stung to open resentment.

"Sneak?"

"Yes, sneak! You'd run us out of this country if you could, but you can't. You'd take my man if you could, but you can't!"—through shut teeth.

"Your man?"—looking at the girl and then at Beck in bewilderment.

"Yes, my man! Oh, don't think I don't know. I saw it all. I saw one of your hands take him to your house last night. I followed him. I



"I FOLLOWED HIM. I WATCHED THROUGH YOUR WINDOW. I SAW YOU BEG WITH HIM AN' PLEAD WITH HIM"

watched through your window. I saw you beg with him an' plead with him. I know what you want. Why, he's told me everything from the first! You got him to foller you out here; you got mad at him an' threw him out of your house once. Now you want him back. You want him back, I suppose, while he"—tilting her head toward Tom—"is away on round-up! You want him back, when you've got everything you want, an' he's all I got—all I ever had!"

Tears sprang into her eyes, and her voice came through trembling lips. Jane, swept by confusion, sought words and found none. It was preposterous! And yet the very accusation degraded her. To be drawn into a quarrel over a man, and such a man!

"You'd take this claim, if you could, when you've got more land than anybody around here. You'd take my man, when you've got lots of others yourself. You *must* have lots, like you got lots of other things. Maybe you think that by takin' him you can drive me out an' get the claim that way. Maybe that's your reason, you—" She seemed to search in vain for an expletive that would convey her contempt.

"But you misunderstand!" cried Jane. "You're all wrong."

"Wrong, am I? Wrong, when you put your arms around his neck, an' put your face close to his, an' make him look at you, an' beg him to do things for your sake? I heard those words—'For my sake.' You said 'em. I suppose that's wrong, is it?"

"But it wasn't that! It wasn't what you think—"

"I s'pose you thought he wouldn't tell me, but he did. He won't come back to you. You couldn't get him away from me!"—in triumph.

Bobby's manner was so assured, she was so convinced of the truth of Hilton's version of last night's encounter, that Jane Hunter was at a loss for argument. Impulsively she turned to look at Beck, as for suggestion, and what she saw there stripped her of all ability to fight back. His face was as devoid of expression as a human countenance can be, but his eyes challenged, accused, bore down upon her, demanding an explanation. Evidently he suspected her. He gave credence to Bobby's accusation.

A word, even a gesture, would have cleared the situation, but his look struck

her inarticulate, immobile. She had been so confident of herself, of his trust; and now he had listened to this monstrous charge and held her to answer.

"You, with your fine notions, your money, your city ways!" the other taunted. "You, with all you've got, would take the only thing I've got—the only thing I've ever had! An' now you come askin' favors. Favors from me! Why, all I'll do for you is to run you out of this country. I've heard what they call me here—the Catamount. I'll show you how a catamount can scratch and bite!"

It swept over Jane that she must reply; that she must say some word in her own defense; that she must say it now; that in this second of time her fate swung in the balance; that bitter though an explanation might be, she must make it, for Beck was listening, Beck was watching, Beck was doubting.

But, as she would have spoken, lamely, but with enough clarity to absolve her from suspicion, Bobby stepped closer.

"You take your men an' light out!" she snapped. "You keep your men out of here an' your cattle away from this fence. The first steer that breaks through 'll get shot down; the first man that tries to help 'em through will find that he needs help himself. I hate you!" she cried. "I hate you worse 'n I hate a snake, an' I'll treat you like a snake from now on. You carry that idea home with you, an' this—as first payment, to bind the bargain!"

With a quick, sharp swing of her arm she whipped her quirt through the air. It stung the other woman's soft throat with a vicious snap.

Jane stepped back with a choking cry, hiding her face. She heard Beck's short "That 'll do!"—uttered in a strange, unnatural voice, as if his throat were dry. She heard the Catamount's contemptuous sniff and her hard "Clear out!"

She found herself in her saddle again, riding beside Beck as they moved toward the other H. C. riders, who, dismounted and seated on the ground, had not witnessed the dramatic parley and its humiliating climax. She was confronted by a situation which clearly spelled disaster for her ranch unless it was solved, and solved quickly; but that did not matter now.

She had been whipped, as the man who had insulted Bobby Cole had been whipped.

She had been drawn into a brawl. Still worse, she had found that the man toward whom she had toiled from the Jane Hunter that had been to the Jane Hunter she had one day dreamed she might be, had doubted her.

He was talking haltingly, something about bringing more men to shove the cattle up into the Coyote Creek country; but even through her confusion she realized that his thoughts were not finding words, that he was forcing himself to talk. Her heart wanted to cry out, to tell him that he had misunderstood; that her meeting with Hilton was not brought about by the motive Bobby Cole had suspected. The old Jane Hunter would have done so, but with her new strength had come another thing, until that hour hidden—pride, a pride which was as noble as her love, which would permit no pleading, which would not stoop to conquer!

She fought it down, striving for clarified thought, feeling for the word, the brief sentence, which would explain away Beck's suspicion and leave her pride uninjured, for there must be such a way. And while she fought, blinded by tears and confused by humiliation, the moment of opportunity passed. Beck left her.

The men were grouped about her foreman as he said:

"I was going to send one of you to bring a dozen of the boys from the wagon to help save this stuff, if we can; but I've changed my mind." His words had a bitter significance which they did not catch. "I'm goin' myself. Curtis, you're in charge. Keep your head. Keep the cattle from breakin' that fence, because they'll shoot 'em down, an' if they start shooting cattle there'll be a lot of us get shot."

Beck started away at a gallop, without so much as a look at Jane. Impulsively she called his name and spurred her sorrel after him. He set his horse on his haunches, wheeled, and waited for her, his face white, his eyes dark and accusing. That look checked the words that were on her lips as effectively as a blow on the mouth, and he spoke first as she halted beside him:

"You did send for him, I take it? You didn't deny that."

He was hard and cruel. His brows gathered, and the storm within him stung that pride of hers further, roused it to newer life.

"Yes, I sent for him," she managed to say; "but, Tom, won't—"

"That's all that's necessary, then," he said, and was gone.

She sat on her horse watching him ride across the flat for the steep trail that led out of the Hole, and she felt that all the sweetness of her life, everything that made it worth while, was riding hard behind that straight figure. A bitter feeling of rebellion rose in her heart. He would not listen to her, and she had tried to speak!

Jane did not consider that this was but one evidence of the greatness of such a man's love, of the sacredness with which he treasured it. All she saw was the distrust, the unbelief; and after a time she rode slowly on, watching him become a fleck on the face of the mountain, seeing him finally disappear over the rim—passing out of her life, it seemed.

With leaden heart Jane entered the ranch-house and sat heavily in the chair before her desk. An envelope was there, addressed to her in Beck's coarse hand. She tore it open with unsteady fingers.

The little gold locket which had been warmed first by her heart, then by Beck's, which had been her talisman for months, slipped into her palm. With tear-dimmed eyes she looked at it, and then turned to the letter, reading:

It is likely that you need your luck worse than I do, so I am returning your gift. I would go away from your outfit now, but if I did they would say that they drove me out as they've said they would do. My reputation is all I have left now, and I would like to keep that, because a man must have something.

I did not want to love you in the first place, as you may recall, but I guess I was pretty weak, for a man. I told you once that there were things I did not understand about you, and I guess the way you think about men is one of them. I wanted to drive him out of the country, and you would not let me. I waited a long time to-day for you to deny what the Cole girl said, and you did not do it. I was pretty mad when I left you, but I realize now that it's all my fault. I took a chance, which is not the way to do, and now I am paying for it. Well, I am able to pay.

I hope you will not answer this, and will not try to talk to me again, unless on business. I do not blame you. I blame myself, but I do not want to talk about it. I will take good care of your cattle and your men, because that is my job. I will run these men out of this country, and then, if I am able to resign, I will.

Respectfully,
TOM BECK.

She put down the letter, feeling queerly numb. She experienced no particular re-

sentment, because she could well see how her failure to speak at the proper moment had condemned her in Beck's eyes. Her sensation was of one who has failed in a crisis. Bobby Cole had dominated her, had swept her off her feet, had given her that depressing feeling of inferiority again, and before her lover's eyes. It had shaken her assurance, made her question the strength of which she had been so certain in the last week. It was this that hurt her far more than the stinging welt about her throat where the lash had bitten her flesh.

She inquired for Two-Bits, and learned that the doctor had left him with the assurance that it would not take him very long to recover from his wound. She ate her dinner abstractedly. In all she did she

him departing she laughed rather weakly to herself.

It was so simple! There was the agency which could bridge this chasm, and could do so without humiliation to the pride which was creating the conflict within her.



"YOU'D TAKE MY MAN
IF YOU COULD, WHEN
YOU'VE GOT LOTS OF
OTHERS YOURSELF"

moved as one who is only partially alive. Her body seemed to be numb, while her mind was dead. A dull ache pervaded her, a feeling of emptiness, for something vastly important was gone, and she had no means of calling it back.

The Rev. Azariah came and went, taking beds on packhorses; and when Jane saw

Azariah Beal knew her motive in sending for Hilton. He could and would make Beck aware of what had happened. She even thought of writing Tom a note, something as follows:

I am terribly hurt, but in a way it is of my own doing. I have just one thing to request—ask Azariah Beal how and why Dick Hilton came to be here.

But she had no one to send with it, and Beck would be back on the morrow with

the men to move the thirst-tortured cattle. Besides, there must be some other way of effecting her purpose. Such a message would be too cold and formal. It would bring him humbly to her, but she knew how he would suffer when his pride was hurt, as it would surely be. She would take some more tactful course.

She wept a little, but her tears were not tears of despair, and when she slept that night her dreams were not distressing.

XXIV

THROUGHOUT the day the sun beat into the cañon, its heat relieved by rare breezes of brief duration. What wind did come raised swirls of dust and rustled the wilted foliage, for most of the country had become ash-dry.

The cattle, most of them on their fourth waterless day, bawled dismally, a thirsty chorus rising as the day aged. They did not eat; they wandered rapidly about, seeking moisture. Those spots of the creek bed which showed damp above and below Cole's fence were tramped to powder by uneasy hoofs, and a narrow area outside the fence was cut to fluff by the restless wanderings of the suffering steers.

As afternoon came on they abandoned their futile search and clung closer to the wire barrier, snuffing loudly as their nostrils drank in the smell of water as greedily as their throats would have swallowed the fluid itself. Their eyes became wider, wilder, and the bawling was without cessation. Panting flanks pumped the hot air into their bodies in rapid tempo, and slaver hung from loose chops. The herd was in desperate straits.

Now and then a big beeper would rush the fence, as if to tear his way through, but the new wire and solid posts always flung him back. Again, another would push his head tentatively between the strands, and attempt entrance by gentler methods, but always they were driven back either by one of the H. C. riders or by Cole himself.

By the time the sun was half-way to the horizon the steers were moving in a compact mass back and forth along the fence, snuffing, crying, sobbing in dry throats, their bodies hourly growing more gaunt as frenzy added its toll to physical suffering.

The bawling became a din. Big steers shook their heads and looked at one another groggily. One went down, and could

not rise alone. The men "tailed" him up and worked him to a shady spot, where he sank to his side again, panting, drooling, and silent.

"Damn an outfit like that!" growled Curtis, looking across the bunch to Cole, who stood staring back.

"There's goin' to be hell a poppin' here," commented one of the men. "They're waitin' for trouble, an' you can't prevent 'em havin' it. Look at that!"

A half-dozen steers, surging against the fence, put their combined weight on a panel, and the post gave with a snap. Bobby ran forward, brandishing a club, and drove them back as they floundered in the sagging wire, heedless of barbs, their eyes protruding with thirst for the water which their dilated nostrils told them was near.

After Cole had propped the post up again, he shook his fist at Curtis and shouted:

"I'll protect my property! You can protect yourn if you want to. The next critter that breaks down my fence gits lead in his carcass!"

He slouched back to the cabin, and came out again with a rifle. Seating himself on a stump, he crossed his knees and sat waiting, with the weapon across his lap.

"We'll bunch 'em, so we can make a show at holdin' 'em to-night," Curtis said. "That 'll save time in the mornin'—an' we'll need all our time."

Forthwith he and the others began gathering the stragglers into a loose bunch.

The Rev. Azariah came riding across the flat before this was completed. His face was serious, and as he came close to the herd and saw the condition of the cattle, he shook his head apprehensively.

"I fear, brother, that by another day there'll be little strength in those bodies to get 'em up to open water," he said to Curtis.

"It 'll be the devil's own job for sure!" replied the other. "It 'll take twenty men to move 'em, an' if we don't lose half we'll be lucky. If that old cuss would let 'em water once, it 'd be a cinch; but he's a bad *hombre*, an' he won't. There's something back of this, reverend!"

Beal scratched his chin and blinked and looked across to where Cole sat. One of Cole's Mexicans also was armed, and had taken up his position farther down the fence.

"So it would appear," he replied. "As Joshua said to Moses, 'There is a noise of war in the camp.' I see a relationship between the smiting of my beloved brother and the refusal of this outfit to grant water. Oh, another watcher!"

He indicated Pat Webb, who had evidently gained the Cole ranch by a circuitous route, and who had taken up his position within the fence, armed with a rifle.

Night came on with a dry wind in the trees on the heights. Its draft did not reach the Hole, but the sound did, and that uneasy, distant roar served to intensify the distress of the cattle.

Beds were made on a knoll not far from the bunched steers. The Rev. Azariah was the first to rest, while the others, singing, whistling, and slapping chaps with quirts, rode round and round the herd, keeping them away from the fence to give the riflemen no opportunity to shoot. Azariah Beal did not sleep, but rolled uneasily on his tarp, watching the bright, dry stars, and muttering to himself now and then.

Once he got up and fussed about his blankets. Curtis, riding by, stopped.

"No, I can't rest," the clergyman replied to his query. "I believe I have lost one pen. By the way, brother, if these were your cattle, how many head would you give just to get them to water to-night?"

"I'd give several," Curtis answered bitterly. "Yes, I'd give a good many, and look at it as a good investment. Without water we're goin' to make lots of feed for buzzards an' coyotes, tryin' to make that trail to-morrow."

"A good many—a good many," the clergyman muttered as Curtis rode on. "She is for peace, but when she speaks they are for war." He paraphrased the Psalm. "'They that war against thee shall be as nothing'—an investment, a good investment!"

He sat hunched on his bed for some time, whispering over and over:

"A good investment—investment—"

Then suddenly he rose and pawed about him for a dried bough of cedar, which he had cast aside to make his bed. With trembling fingers he sought a match, struck fire, and applied it. The flame licked up the tinder and burst into a brilliant torch.

The bawling of the cattle cut off sharply. Whites of terrified eyes showed for an instant and then vanished as heads were

quickly turned away. The herd stirred like a concentrated mass, body crowding body; it swayed forward, a rumbling of hoofs arose.

From the far side came the shrill yipping of horsemen as they broke into a gallop and sought to set the cattle milling. Futile effort! Driven mad by thirst, it would have required a much less conspicuous disturbance than that flare of fire to start the wild rush. With a roll of hoofs, a sickening, overwhelming sound, heads down, crowded together into a knitted mass of frightened strength, the bunch was in full stampede!

Down the far side rode Curtis, high in his stirrups, his revolver spitting fire into the air. A big, white steer charged straight at his horse like a blinded thing, and the animal carried his rider to momentary safety with only a handbreadth to spare.

On another flank of the herd another rider charged in and shouted and shot and swung off. There was no time; there was no room! It was less than a hundred yards to the fence, and to be caught between its stout strands and those charging heads meant death. Curtis's warning cry cut in above the fury of the flight as he doubled back toward safety.

Within the fence were shouts. Figures sprang to outline in the darkness. The first steer's shoulders struck the wire. The fence held, threw him back, and then, driven forward again by oncoming numbers, the creature plunged, torn and raw, through a broken and tangled barrier. There was a creaking strain of wire, a snapping of stout posts, and then orange stabs out of the night. Two, four, five—the sounds of rifle-shots pricked through the background of heavier sounds.

A steer bawled once, its voice pitched high, and went down. Another dropped beneath the rushing hoofs without a sound. From their path ran the riflemen, desperate in their fright, heedless of damage done to property or rights. Over, under, and through the broken wire went the cattle, pouring into the cleared land, crowding, snorting, gaining momentum with each stride. On across the flat, on down the steep bank of the creek, on into the water that sloshed about their knees—

And there, as quickly as it had come, their panic departed, for their need of that water dissipated their fright. The noise of the flight subsided, and into the night rose

the greedy sound of their guzzling, as the water which Cole had fenced and sought to hold was gulped down the parched throats of H. C. cattle.

Curtis rode up at a gallop, drawing his horse to such a quick stop that his hoofs scattered dirt over Azariah.

"What in—" he began.

"I found it!" cried the Rev. Azariah in exultation, holding up a fountain pen. "Must have dropped out when I took off my coat."

"But look what you've done," cried the other. "They killed four steers!"

Azariah looked up at him, the shrewdness in his face covered by darkness, but his voice was guile itself.

"A small investment, brother—a good investment. Perhaps a parable is writ this night—a pillar of fire, a smiting of the rock."

Curtis whistled lowly.

"Reverend, you planned it all out!"

"It is not given to me to plan; I am guided by the spirit of righteousness. Besides, those who lack wisdom are the only ones who divulge their innermost thoughts, brother. It seems that I found a way out of Egypt for the cattle, as 'twere. Remember, brother, the way of the Lord is strength!"

They had not heard Bobby Cole running through the brush toward them, but as the Rev. Azariah stopped, she stepped between him and Oliver's horse.

"So that's it!" she hissed. "So you're the one to blame! I'll tell you what I told your boss this mornin', that I'll run you out of the country if it's the last thing I do, you Bible-talkin' rat! This ain't the first thing I've got against you"—darkly. "I might 've forgot the other, because she was to blame for it, but I've heard what you just said, an' I won't forget this. An' don't think I'm the only one who'll keep it in mind. You'll be run out of this country like a snake chased out of a cabin—remember that!"

For a moment she stood confronting him in the darkness, and though her features were not clearly distinguishable, they could see by the poise of her figure that those were no idle threats. Then she went as quickly as she had come, leaving the Rev. Azariah scratching his chin and Curtis whistling softly to himself.

"A woman possessed of the devil!" said Beal softly.

"Yeah—or three or four," commented the other.

"Yesterday I sought to save her soul, and to-morrow I must seek to save my own skin."

There was no more shooting, because the H. C. cattle were mingled with Cole's. Curtis parleyed with the nester, who made whining threats of a suit for damages.

When the H. C. men returned to the beds for the remainder of the night, the Rev. Azariah was not there.

"Dragged it for the ranch!" Curtis chuckled.

So he thought. As a matter of fact, the clergyman had dragged it, but not for the H. C. or any other near-by stopping-place. Though Beal did not know all that was on foot to bring about the ruin of Jane Hunter, he knew enough to realize that he had made one determined enemy that night; that to make one was to make many, and that Bobby Cole's intimation that he had plunged himself into disfavor with others was no empty warning.

The Rev. Azariah Beal was not a coward, but he was discreet. The risk of remaining was not justified by the end he might serve, and he sought sanctuary in distance.

Tom Beck led the riders from the wagon into the Hole at dawn. Gathering the refreshed cattle and moving them up the trail was a difficult task, but it was accomplished without further loss—a fact which satisfied the men. They reached the ranch on their way back to the round-up camp in the late afternoon.

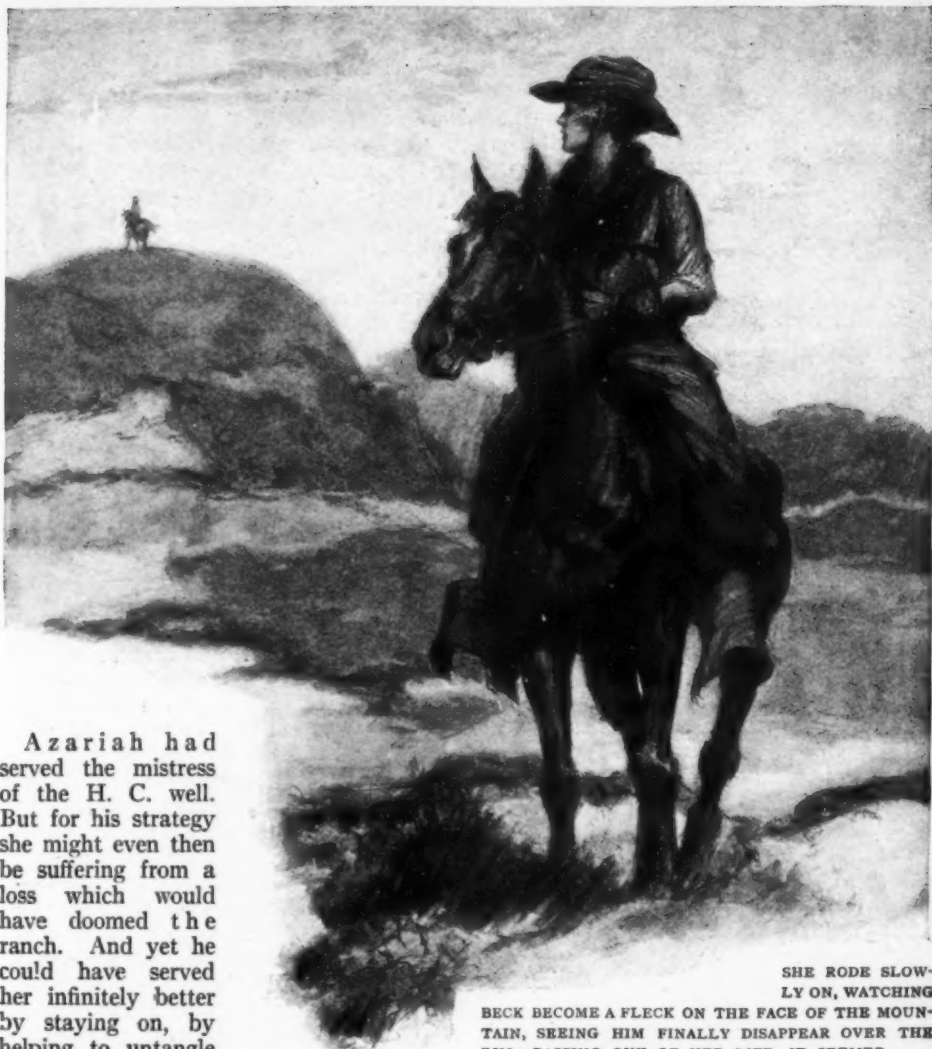
News of the saving stampede had been carried ahead, and Jane realized that one difficulty had been surmounted, and that the financial ruin which had confronted her was temporarily averted. However, the removal of that distraction allowed her mind to concentrate on her greater trouble—the breach which separated her from Tom Beck. Only one way seemed open—to prevail upon Azariah Beal to explain matters, and that way was closed when a passing cowboy handed her a note, written hastily on rough paper. She read:

The call has come, and my feet are turned toward a far country.

My arm has been raised for you. Though I am no longer in your presence, my prayers will continue to be lifted in your behalf.

Respy.,

A. BEAL.



Azariah had served the mistress of the H. C. well. But for his strategy she might even then be suffering from a loss which would have doomed the ranch. And yet he could have served her infinitely better by staying on, by helping to untangle the perplexing snarl which a series of unlucky circumstances had made in her affairs.

There was just one other course to follow, she told herself—to go to Tom and explain everything.

Then up rose her pride and made denial. She could not do that. If his love would not bear up under doubt, then she must keep her pride intact, for that was all she possessed. Torn between desire to fling herself upon him and sob out the whole story, and a resolve to maintain her stand until he should be proved wrong and come to her in contrition, she made no decision until the riders had come and gone.

SHE RODE SLOWLY ON, WATCHING BECK BECOME A FLECK ON THE FACE OF THE MOUNTAIN, SEEING HIM FINALLY DISAPPEAR OVER THE RIM—PASSING OUT OF HER LIFE, IT SEEMED

She watched Beck riding at a trot down the road, looking neither to the right nor left. She could not know that a similar struggle tortured him.

"Turn back!" one voice in his heart commanded. "Seek her out and question and question until you know why. If you learn the worst, if she has been hiding a secret affection from you, beg her to turn from it, to come to you. Offer her your all—your pride, your life, if need be. She is all that living holds for you!"

And then spoke that other, sterner self, which said over and over:

"That cannot be! If there is that in

her heart which must be hidden from you, draw back now and save all that is left to you—your pride!”

So pride held the woman in her house and led the man down Coyote Creek, and each mile, each hour put between them multiplied the difficulties, wore down the chance of reconciliation. For by such simple, basic conflicts are lives ruined!

XXV

NIGHT had come upon the round-up camp, the fires near the cook-wagon were dying. On the rise to the southward the night-hawk sat with an eye on the saddle stock, which grazed over a wide area, and in their teepees the men were sleeping, preparatory to the first day's riding.

Tom Beck sat alone by the glowing remnants of the cook's fire, staring stolidly into the coals, struggling with his pride. That quiet inner voice continued its insistence that he should yield a trifle, should give Jane Hunter one more chance.

“What,” it asked, “will you gain by denying her this? What, indeed, will be left for you if you persist?”

But the voice was weaker than it had been early that day, the alternative it raised in his consciousness less appealing; and a determination to smother it grew steadily. He had been crossed; he had been duped. He had been a fool, he told himself. He had thrown to the winds his caution and his reserve; he had taken the biggest chance that life, the trickster, dangles before men. He had taken it blindly, against his better judgment.

It left him embittered, with nothing beyond except the position that he held among men. That was a poor attainment now; it was cheap and inconsequential, compared to the sense of accomplishment which had been his when Jane Hunter had thrown herself into his arms and begged him to carry her into his life. Deluded though he might have been, that moment had opened to him sensations, vistas, that he had never before imagined to exist.

And now all else that remained was gray and dead. He had been lifted up to see what might be, only to find that it was denied him. More, those moments of glory had taken the zest from the life that had been his.

For long he sat there, and gradually the inner voice died entirely. Its place as the chief interest in his life was taken by a

cold and heartless desire to cling to a dead thing like his standing in the country. He had written to Jane that such was all that remained to him. He had not realized, as he scrawled the words, what a pitiful bauble it was; but now he was forced to endow it with values that he could not truly feel. But he forced himself to believe it of consequence, for men like Tom Beck must have some valuable thing to live for.

The teepees were quiet when he rose, dropped his dead cigarette into the expiring embers, and sought his bed; but in one of them a man looked out at the faint jingle of spurs. It was Riley, who, with others from the lower country, was riding with the H. C. wagon to help the larger outfit, and, in turn, to be helped in his branding. He was bunked with Jimmy Oliver.

“What's he doin'?” said Oliver.

“Turnin' in.”

“It's funny, darned funny, Jim,” muttered Riley, settling back in his blankets. “He's like a man that's *through*. Didn't appear to have any real interest in the work to-day; seemed like he didn't give a damn. I don't understand it. If it wasn't Tom Beck I'd say that they'd got his goat; but that's hard to believe of him.”

“It can't be that,” Oliver was loyal. “It's somethin' else; but it seems like somethin' worse than a man bein' sick of his job. Still, he said twice to-day that he wouldn't be here long, an' the way he said *long* made me think it'd be a mighty short time.”

Silence for a time.

“Mebby,” said Riley, “it's her.”

“Mebby you're right,” the other replied.

“Tom never used to give a cent whether school kept or not. Then after she come he changed, got to takin' things seriously, and anybody could see he was gone on her.”

“Well, he ain't afraid of men. There ain't bad men enough in this country to drive Tom Beck out; but women—they'll put a crimp in the best of us!”

It was on the following evening that news of the destruction of Cathedral Tank was brought to Tom Beck. Riley had ridden the far circle himself, and had found no cattle at all at the water-hole, which the H. C. foreman had visited only a few days before. That is, he had found no live cattle. He had seen four steer carcasses, al-

ready ravaged by coyotes and buzzards, had discovered the fresh gash in the rock basin, and had ridden back to help the cowboys who were on shorter circles, holding explanation of the fact that he returned empty-handed until he could give it first to Beck.

Tom received the news silently.

"I expect you can fix up the basin with some concrete so it 'll hold next winter," Riley said.

"It's likely," the other responded; "but next winter's plans for this outfit ain't worryin' me, Riley."

He meant, of course, that there were matters of greater importance just then. The dynamiting had been accomplished after his warning to Webb and Hepburn, which was clear evidence that the war was going on as desperately as before, that these other men were not cowed, that their determination to run him from the country had not been shaken.

A hot rage swept through him. Next winter's plans were remote indeed! Fate had taken his woman from him; these renegades would take away his last hold on life!

But Riley did not construe Beck's meaning as such, and on the following morning, when the foreman called Jimmy Oliver aside and talked to him, the misunderstanding in Jimmy's mind became more complicated when Tom said:

"Jimmy, you're goin' to lead this round-up for a while—mebby for good."

"So, Tom?" returned Oliver in surprise, and in hope that an explanation would be forthcoming.

"I'm leavin' here, an' mebby I won't be back."

Beck was thinking that he would inspect the tank, track down the men responsible for its destruction, and make them pay. He said that he might not be back because he had warned them away from H. C. property and could expect no leniency if he invaded their stronghold. Invade it he would, for this affair had gone past the point where he could play a waiting game. So long as it had been his safety that mattered most, he could assume and retain the defensive; but now Two-Bits had all but lost his life while executing his orders, and H. C. cattle had been driven by hundreds into the high country before he had planned to take them there. It was time to counter-attack.

Rapidly the word ran through the camp—Beck was leaving. As it passed from man to man it grew and took definite shape, as rumors will—Beck was quitting.

He ate silently with the others. His very silence was so marked that it quieted the other men, and warded off the questions which under other circumstances might have been put to him.

The wrangler brought in the horses, and Beck was the first to approach the cavet with rope ready. He selected his big roan, looked the animal over carefully, and, slinging a canteen over the horn, climbed rather heavily to the saddle.

Other men were catching up their mounts. One horse was pitching and fighting the rope; two others were trying desperately to break out of the cavet. There was running about and confusion, but as Beck rode away to the westward, with his head down, obviously absorbed in himself, men stopped to watch and to wonder.

The H. C. foreman was not the only individual in that country who, as the sun rose over the far rim of the world, thought so intensely of private and personal interests as to lose consciousness of what was happening in the rest of the world.

Jane Hunter sat suddenly up in her bed, her golden hair in a shower about her shoulders, her blue eyes filled with tears. She stared about her as one will who rouses abruptly from a startling dream. She put a hand to her flushed throat; her lips were parted, her breath quick and irregular. She held so for a moment, and then sank back into the pillows, calling softly:

"Tom! Tom!"

Her slender body quivered, and her sobbing became like that of a child. She flung her hand across the covers, clenched it feebly, and feebly beat the bedding, as if hammering hopelessly at walls which held her in and made her a prisoner—as indeed she was, a prisoner to her pride.

High up on the point that formed the western flank of the gap to Devil's Hole, Sam McKee dropped down from his gray horse and stood looking far out across the level country beneath him. In the clear air he could see the smoke of the round-up camp-fire.

Yesterday he had watched from that same spot, with Hilton's words still in his ears, Hilton's hope in his heart, and had



"I'LL PROTECT MY PROPERTY. YOU CAN PROTECT YOURN IF YOU WANT TO. THE NEXT CRITTER THAT BREAKS DOWN MY FENCE GITS LEAD IN HIS CARCASS!"

known that Riley rode to the tank. Last night he had once more talked and walked in the darkness with the Easterner, had heard Hilton's crafty questioning of Hepburn and Webb, which caused them to repeat again and again their belief that Tom Beck would take it upon himself to inspect

the damage done by the dynamite. He had slept fitfully, in a fever of anticipation.

And yet he had kept secret his achievement in shooting down Two-Bits. There was a time for all things, and the time to divulge that minor accomplishment was not yet. For long he had been belittled,

and had had but a poor standing among his associates. Now they were banded in common cause, he had made one step toward triumph, and that move had reestablished his self-confidence, which had lain dormant for long. It had enabled Hilton's suggestions to take hold, enabled McKee to whet his own hate, to work himself into a paroxysm of rage;

Then he mounted the gray and swung down the treacherous point, seeking a big wash that made a wrinkle in the floor of the desert, where flood waters had rushed



THE EYES OF THE STEERS PROTRUDED WITH THIRST FOR THE WATER WHICH THEIR DILATED NOSTRILS TOLD THEM WAS NEAR

and to-day he was to emerge a figure of consequence, for he was to remove the great obstacle in the path of all the conspirators.

Webb's battered field-glasses were slung over McKee's shoulder, and as he picked out the lone dot of moving life, coming slowly in his direction, he unstrapped the case with hands that trembled. It required but one moment to identify that horse, for none but Beck's roan swung along with the same distance-eating shack; but the watcher stared for a long interval, his body tense, his breath slow and audible, as if tantalizing himself with the sight of that isolated rider and teasing his own hatred.

toward the tank for countless decades. In this he could ride unseen.

He went forward at a trot, his eyes straight ahead, his tongue moistening his lips from time to time.

XXVI

THE outcropping ledge that formed Cathedral Tank stood stark and saffron in the lap of the desert under the morning sun, flinging out slow waves of heat even at that early hour, as Sam McKee rode from the wash into the basin and stopped his horse.

Since the mountains themselves were made, that group of pinnacles and ledges had jutted up from the seamed desert, a

landmark for miles around, catching the flood waters that periodically rushed toward it from far hills.

The name of the tank was the result of no far-fetched imagining, for the granite rose in long, slender spires, as if the thirsty desert stretched great fingers toward the sky in stiff appeal. Narrow defiles struck back into the granite, sharp crevices cut deeply down between the natural minarets, and at one place a larger opening led backward into the rocks, widening and narrowing again, thus forming the rough outlines of transept and nave. More, the wind which always blew there often sounded deep notes as of an organ when it wandered through narrow spaces. On three sides the abrupt, ragged rise of rock shut in the basin, while the other was open to the waters that swept down from the southward and eastward.

When McKee neared the entrance, he stopped his horse and reconnoitered. The other rider was not in sight, being lost in one of the many depressions of the valley, and still miles away, for the gray horse had traveled a shorter distance, and that at a trot. The roan could not arrive for some time, Sam reasoned.

The man stopped his horse at the edge of the fresh, deep scar which Hepburn's explosive had made. Other tracks were there, made by Riley on the previous day. Across the way lay the dead steers, and overhead a buzzard wheeled slowly, waiting to return to the feast from which he had been frightened by Sam's approach.

"Bone dry!" the man said aloud, and laughed.

He drank from his canteen and wiped his lips with a long sigh, either of satisfaction or of anticipation. Then he looked about, not absently, but with plan and craft.

To that point Beck would come, there he would stand. Behind was a ledge on the face of the towering rock, higher than a mounted man's head, with enough backward pitch to conceal a man's body. It would be a hard scramble, but Sam could gain it by the aid of a tough shrub that grew on the wall. Once there he would be protected.

He rode close under this ledge and stood in his saddle, his lips parted and his eyes alight with excitement. He could hold off a regiment there; what chance would one unsuspecting man have? As he stood so,

he unstrapped his gun and laid it, with its belt, on the shelf.

He dropped down and rode into a narrow crevice near by, where his horse could remain concealed. He dismounted and took down his rope, preparatory to tying the animal.

He believed that his growing haste was only the eagerness of anticipation, but perhaps there was a quality of premonition in it. He had been unable to follow Beck's progress and remain concealed himself; therefore he had not seen the roan pick up his swinging trot as Tom's concentrated thought reached a pitch of intensity and he sought relief in speed.

McKee reached for the reins to lead his horse farther into the crevice. Then, as he looked at the animal, his heart leaped, and he went quickly cold.

The gray's head was up, his ears stiff, his eyes alert, as a horse will pose on sensing the approach of another animal. Even as Sam's hands flashed out for his nose, the nostrils fluttered, and had the man been an instant later a betraying whinny would have gone echoing through the rocks to warn Beck; but McKee was in time to drive his fingers into the soft muzzle and choke back the sound.

The gray stepped quickly and shook his head, whereat McKee somewhat relaxed his grasp. They then stood quiet, both listening, the horse alert, the man weak and white, breathing in fluttering gasps.

He was trapped! Out there on the ledge, where he had planned to wait and shoot Beck down without giving or taking a chance, lay his gun. On either side the walls rose sheer, without so much as a handhold for yards above his head; before was a blank wall; outside was Tom Beck. And fear of a degree such as the man had never known shook his body.

It was a fear which is as dangerous to an enemy as the most reckless courage. Discovery would mean catastrophe; McKee had nothing to gain by shirking now!

Slowly he released his grip on the gray's nostrils, holding ready to clamp it down again should his horse attempt to greet the other. He heard hoofs clatter on the rock basin, and knew that Beck had stopped. Then the wind souged through the rocks with its prolonged organ tone, and for the moment McKee could only guess what happened out there.

The gray, with head turned, stared to-

ward the opening of the crevice, and then, as no other sounds came, swung his head back to its normal position and switched rather languidly at flies.

Carefully McKee stole toward the entrance of the crevice, where he might see the other man. He went with a hand against the granite, putting down his boots very carefully, hoping against hope that Beck would be so far away that he could either recover his gun or devise some means of escape. Perspiration ran from beneath his hatband, and his hands were clammy cold. His breath continued in that fluttering gasp.

Beck had dismounted, and was squatting beside the scar in the rocks. His roan stood a dozen feet behind him. McKee peered out, measuring the distance quickly. The other's back was to him, but he could not regain his gun without being detected. Beck's revolver swung from his hip, and McKee had nothing with which to fight but the rope in his hands.

The rope! He stared down at it and drew back behind the shoulder of rock. The rope!

An absurd, impotent device, but it had served purposes as desperate as this. There was a hope in it, and there was no other hope beneath that blue dome of sky.

McKee looked out again as he built his loop. Beck was on hands and knees, peering down into the crack through which the stored waters had trickled away. Sam made his loop quickly, steeling to caution. He moved out from his hiding-place a step, then another. The roan looked up with a little whiff of breath, and Beck, attracted by the slight noise, turned his head sharply toward the horse.

It was then that the loop swirled and that McKee sped forward a dozen paces as quickly and quietly as a cat, balanced, sure of himself in that crisis. From the tail of his eye Beck saw the loop cut the corner of his range of vision, and his body made the first lunge toward an erect position as the lithe, writhing thing sped through the air.

McKee had never thrown so truly. The rope settled about Tom's arms and beneath his knees. It came taut with an angry grip, even as the snared man made the first move to throw it off. He was pitched violently forward on his face, his arms pinned to his sides, his legs doubled against his stomach.

The breath went from him in an angry oath of surprise as McKee's breath shot from his lips in an oath of triumph. Hand over hand he went down the rope, keeping it taut, yet hastening to reach the doubled body before Beck could wriggle free. He fell upon Beck just as one arm worked slack enough to permit the hand to strain for the revolver at his hip.

Snarling, gibbering with a mingling of terror and rage, McKee's one hand fastened on the gun. He clung to the rope with the other, battering Beck, who struggled to rise, back to earth with his knees. His fingers clamped on the grip of the Colt; he pulled free; it flashed in the air as his thumb sought the hammer. Then, as he drove the muzzle downward against the living target, the man beneath him bowed and writhed, and Sam went over with a cry. A fist struck his wrist; the revolver exploded in the air and fell a dozen feet away.

Then it was man to man, a fight of bone, muscle, and rope. Blindly McKee clung to the strand with one hand. It passed about his body as they rolled over. Beck's own weight, struggling to tear from it, tightened its hold. Tom struck savagely at the face beside him with his one free fist, while McKee's knees, jamming into his stomach, crushed the breath from him.

For one vibrant instant their strength was matched, the one's physical advantage offset by the handicap of the lariat about him. Then the rope told. Slowly Tom's resistance became less, gradually McKee wound the hemp about his own hand and wrist, shutting down its sinuous grasp, drawing Beck's body into a more compact knot. With a desperate shift of his body he was on top, winding the hard twist about Tom's hands, trussing them tightly behind his back, licking his own lips as he made his victim secure.

In that time neither had spoken, nor did McKee utter a sound as he rose, wiped the dust and sweat from his eyes, and surveyed the bound figure at his feet. Beck looked back at him, the rage in his eyes giving way to a sane calculation. At the cost of great effort he rolled over and propped himself on one elbow. A scratch on his forehead sent a trickle of blood into one eye, and he shook his head to be rid of it, coughing slightly as he did so.

"Now," he said, his panting becoming less noticeable, "what do you think you're goin' to do?"

McKee laughed sharply and looked away. He walked to where the revolver lay in the sunlight, picked it up, broke it, examined the cartridges, and closed it again.

"I come out here to kill you, Beck. That's what I'm goin' to do next."

He did not lift his voice, but about his manner was a swagger, the boasting of the craven who for once is beyond fear of retribution. A slow shadow crossed between them as the buzzard wheeled, waiting, lazily impatient.

Beck delayed for a brief interval before asking:

"Right here, Sam? You goin' to kill me right here?"

"Right here, you—" He spat out the unforgivable epithet with a curl to his lip. For once he had this man where he wanted him; Beck's life was in his hands. "I'm goin' to kill you like I'd kill a snake! I've stood for a lot from you, but you've gone too far; you've played your hand too high!"

He began to feel a greater sense of his importance. He dominated the situation, and it was sweet.

"I've waited a long time, Beck. I ain't forgot a thing you've done to me. I've been waitin' for just this chance, an' now I'm goin' to kill you!"

The man's lips trembled with rage, but as he glared down at the other he saw the level, mocking eyes studying his. He had not yet impressed Tom Beck; had not made him fear. It was disconcerting.

"What you goin' to kill me with, Sam?"

"With your own gun, by God!" McKee replied, spinning the cylinder.

A moment of silence while Sam looked at the dull barrel, a queer, quick hesitancy coming over him—something that he did not understand, that he did not will.

"With my own gun?" Beck repeated.

McKee cocked the weapon and looked about.

"When you goin' to do the killin', Sam?"

The level, mocking tone infuriated the other.

"Now!" he cried, shaken by hate. "Now, by God!"

He screamed the curse, threw the gun up to position, and glared into Beck's face, moving forward a step, standing poised, ready to shoot.

But he had failed to reckon on one fact. The human eye is a more wonderful

weapon than the inventive genius of man has ever devised, and he was meeting the gaze from an eye that was as steady, as fearless, as collected, as any he had ever seen. His courage was the courage bred of cowardly impulses, and it could not stand before fearlessness.

"Right now, Sam?"

The question was low, gentle, and with another shade of inflection might have been a plea. But it was no plea. It was subtle, stinging mockery which penetrated McKee's understanding and gave full life to the hesitancy that had shaken him a moment before.

"You ain't goin' to kill me right off, are you, Sam?"

And at that McKee's irresolution became full-blown. His body swung backward from its menacing poise; his gun hand dropped just a degree; his gaze, an instant before fixed and red with hate, now wavered unsteadily.

"No, you ain't goin' to kill me now, Sam. You ain't got the guts!"

Prostrate, bound, wholly helpless, miles from aid, Beck flung the defiant words from his lips. They pelted on McKee's ears like hard-flung stones, and he looked back to see his captive's eyes, which a moment ago had been amused, blazing righteous wrath.

"You wouldn't kill anybody, McKee," Beck said after a breathless pause. In that pause McKee's gun hand had gone to his side, and as it went down so did the flare of rage in Beck's face. His eyes grew calm and steady again, with that covert amusement in them. "You ain't just that kind of a man. If you'd been goin' to kill me, you'd have done it right off. You wouldn't have waited, like you're waitin' now. You missed out on your intentions, Sam, when you didn't do it *pronto*."

Across McKee's face swept a wave of helpless rage, humiliation, shame, self-revulsion. He stood there unable to move. He wanted to kill with a lust that men seldom feel, but he could not, for he knew that he was a coward; knew that Beck knew it, and the assurance that it was within his physical power to take a life without risk to his own mattered not at all. The moral force was lacking.

He tried to meet Beck's gaze and hold it, but he could not. The captive, even now, did not fear him; and to a man who had been impelled to every strong act by

fear, fearlessness is of itself an overwhelming force.

Tom talked on, quietly, confidently. He chided, he made fun of his captor; he belittled himself, discussed his inability to defend himself, but time after time he said with emphasis:

"You're afraid of me, Sam!"

Afraid of him? Yes, McKee was fear-filled. He could not kill, and yet the thought of the retribution that might come for going even thus far put him in a panic. There were others who would kill. Webb would have done it, Hepburn might have done it. There was one other who would have killed—Hilton; but McKee could not, and the others were far off. They would know, they would ridicule him, and the thought of that, coming so close on the high expectation of triumph that had sent him out on the desert, made his position hopeless.

He turned and walked slowly toward the ledge which was to have been his hiding-place.

"Goin' to leave me, Sam?" Beck asked.

"You'll see what I'm goin' to do!" McKee raved, wheeling, suddenly articulate. "You'll see what 'll happen to you, you —! What's already happened is only a starter. I didn't intend to kill you myself. I only come here to hog-tie you. I guess I done that, didn't I?"

"Are you quite sure, Sam?"

The tone was stinging. Instead of raving on, McKee simply grasped a projecting bit of rock and scrambled up until he could reach his revolver.

Beck asked if that was McKee's arsenal; wanted to know more about Sam's plans; wanted to know who sent him; wanted to know if any one else was coming, or if they were going to meet others. He talked gently, slowly, tauntingly, until McKee fidgeted like an embarrassed schoolgirl.

After a time Beck struggled to a sitting position, with his back against a rock. The searing sun beat down on his bared head, his wrists were swelling, his fingers numb and swollen from the ropes cutting into his flesh. His body ached miserably, but he would not betray it. His throat burned for water, and there was water on his saddle, but he would not mention thirst. There yet was danger! He must keep the other man impressed with his inferiority.

"That your pet buzzard, Sam?" he asked once, squinting upward at the wheel-

ing scavenger. "Somebody said you kept one to pick up after you."

"You wait! You'll have less to say after a while," McKee growled, and stared off toward the heights to the eastward, feigning expectancy.

Then, as Sam paced back and forth, covering his helplessness and his fear to make another move by the sham of watching for other arrivals, Beck's mind began working on a theory. Two-Bits had been shot down the day he had driven McKee off H. C. range. He had been shot from behind. McKee was the only one in the country who had a personal quarrel with the homely cowboy.

It was clear enough to Beck, but he feared that an accusation, bringing some demonstration of guilt, might bring other things that he dared not risk. He was playing a game that was desperate enough. He was alive by the grace of McKee's cowardice, and it was only by the scantiest possible margin that he had conquered thus far. To provoke the desperation that he knew was latent in Sam's heart would be the rankest folly.

Noon, with blistering heat. McKee drank greedily, the water running down his chin and spattering over his boots. It was agony for Beck, but he fought against betraying evidence of it, holding his eyes on the other man, smiling a trifle, and wondering how long he could keep back the groans.

McKee squatted in the shade of a rock for a time. Once he looked at Beck while Tom was staring across the desert, and hate flickered up in his eyes again. Then, as Tom looked back, he got up and walked, licking his lips.

Two o'clock.

"I don't guess they're comin' to-day, Sam. Maybe you misunderstood 'em."

Three o'clock.

"Sure is too bad to have your plans all go to hell, isn't it, Sam?"

The sensation had entirely gone from Beck's hands and lower arms. His biceps and shoulders ached as if they had been mauled; his back was shot with hot stabs of pain.

"You'd ought to have killed me, Sam," he said at four o'clock. "That would have surprised 'em for sure!"

He bit his lips to hold back a moan, and for a time things swam before him. He hoped that he would not lose consciousness; hoped this rather vaguely, for vaguely he

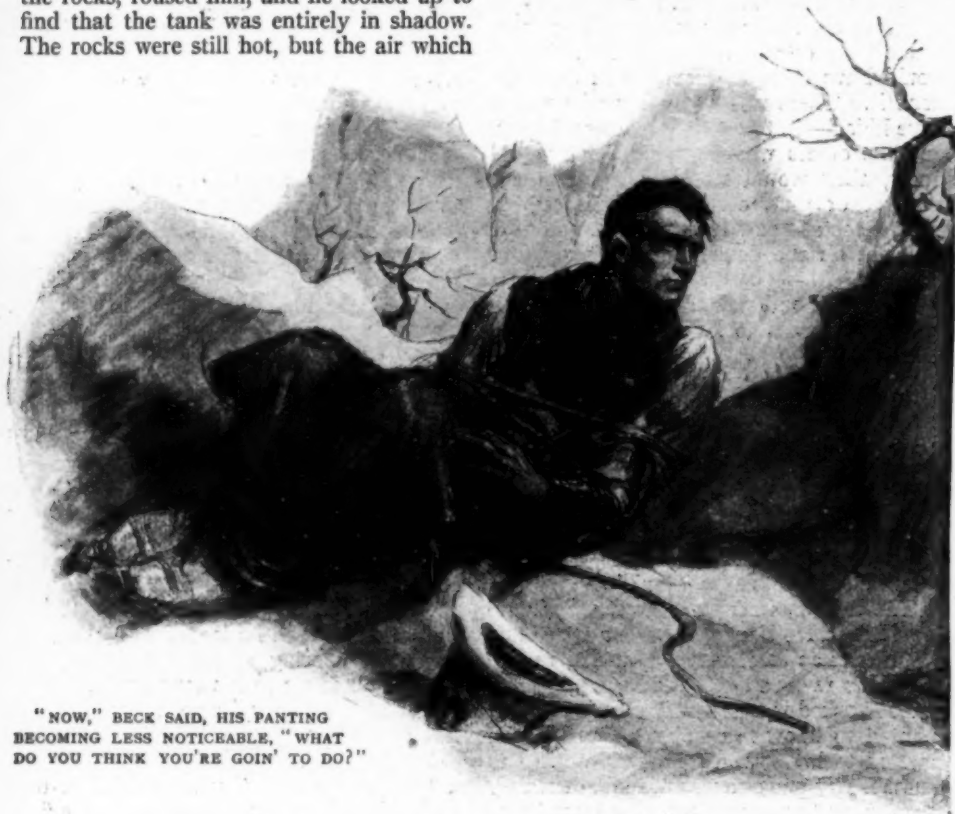
felt that McKee would kill him if he did. He had a confused notion that Jane Hunter was there, and this disturbed him. He felt a sinking sensation. Jane—and this! Why, then, this really mattered very little! That his life was in danger, that his body hurt—these were inconsequential details compared to the love that had died yesterday, to the hurt of his heart.

A draft of cooler air, sucking through the rocks, roused him, and he looked up to find that the tank was entirely in shadow. The rocks were still hot, but the air which

He leaned forward slightly, and his eye had a brighter glint. Question after question he flung at the other. Now and then McKee growled; twice he cursed Beck, in vile explosions of oaths. At these Beck nodded in assent.

"I sure am an undesirable," he said.

Back and forth, bewildered, McKee walked. He dared not face the future with Beck alive; he dared not take Beck's life.



"NOW," BECK SAID, HIS PANTING BECOMING LESS NOTICEABLE, "WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOIN' TO DO?"

moved above them was heavier, cooler. McKee paced nervously back and forth. He wore two guns.

"You reckon somebody's goin' to steal me?" Beck asked, forcing his voice to be steady. "I didn't realize I was valuable enough to be close-herded by a two-gun man."

With the fall of the temperature Tom's alertness revived.

"I'm goin' to sleep right here, Sam; where are you goin' to turn in?" he asked. "I sleep pretty well in the open; how about you?"

He feared the punishment that might be his for what he had already done; he feared the relentless ridicule of Webb and Hepburn and Hilton; he feared to go, he feared to stay. And gradually this last fear grew.

"I think you ought to start out an' ride after 'em, Sam," Beck advised. "Do they *sabe* this country? You better go; they might get strayed. I'll be here. I figure on stayin' quite a time. I—honest, Sam, I've had a good time to-day!"

McKee wheeled in his walking.

"You'll stay all right!" he screamed. "You damned well bet your dirty skin you

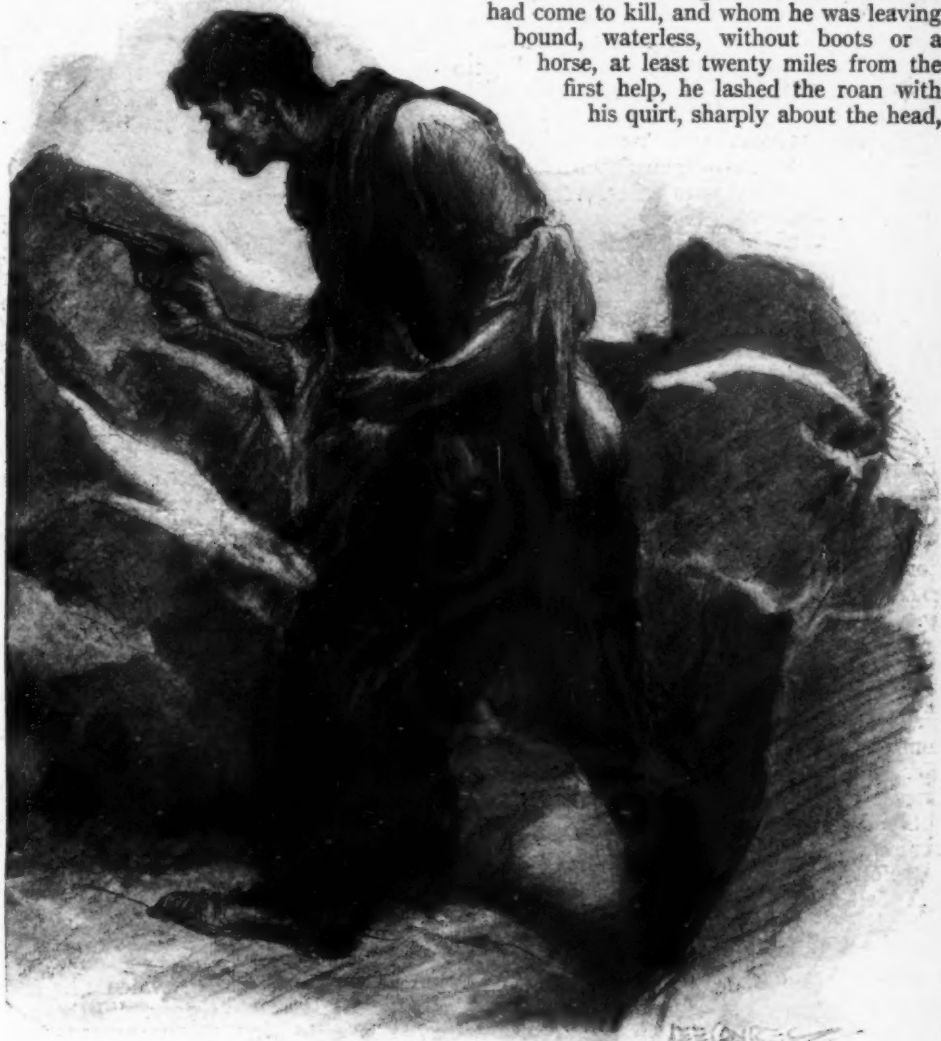
won't go far! You've been talkin' a whole lot wiser than you know. You'll stay right here!"

He dropped to his knees beside Beck, and with a wrench pulled off the man's

boots out, are you, Sam?" he asked in mock concern.

"Never you mind!" McKee snarled.

He brought out his horse, tightened the cinch, and led him toward the roan. He tied Tom's boots to his own saddle, and then, without looking at the man whom he had come to kill, and whom he was leaving bound, waterless, without boots or a horse, at least twenty miles from the first help, he lashed the roan with his quirt, sharply about the head,



"I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME," SAID MCKEE. "I AIN'T FORGOT A THING YOU'VE DONE TO ME. I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR JUST THIS CHANCE, AN' NOW I'M GOIN' TO KILL YOU!"

boots. The movement sent exquisite pains through Tom's body, but he shut his teeth against them. He smiled, demonstrating more of the Spartan by that smile than he had at any time during the day.

"You ain't figurin' on walkin' your own

and, when the big creature wheeled in surprise, about the hocks.

Kicking, frightened, stepping on the reins and breaking them off, Beck's horse ran away—ran scot-free, head up, out to the eastward, headed for home. He began

to buck, pitching desperately. The saddle worked back and under and down. He kicked it free.

Beck knew that somewhere between the tank and that fallen saddle was his canteen; but McKee did not know. He mounted and struck into the wash through which he had ridden hours before, lashing the gray to a gallop, putting distance between himself and his menace, his shame.

And back in the tank, as night came on, a man for whom every move was torment rolled and wriggled from place to place, searching doggedly for a sharp-edged rock, among those that were water-worn and smooth.

The buzzard had ceased his wheeling, the stars came out. Beck talked aloud rather crazily. Everything seemed smooth; even the pain became less harsh; everything was soft and easy—until his cheek felt a ragged, narrow edge of rock, close in against the base of the tallest spire. Moaning feebly, he wriggled against it until the ropes touched the edge. Then, with great labor, he began to writhe and twist. It took hours to fray out a single strand, and his arms were bound by many.

When finally his arms fell apart, sensations—fiendish, killing sensations—began to stab through them; but he laughed lightly. He was free!

Free?

At almost the same moment, back in the H. C. ranch-house, a woman rose from her tumbled bed and dressed herself hurriedly. Her eyes were dry, though her breath came unevenly.

She looked into her mirror as she put on her hat.

"You're a fool!" she said to herself. "A fool! False pride has taken two days out of your life, two precious days!"

She ran down the stairs and out to the corral, and saddled her sorrel horse.

XXVII

It was a long ride from the H. C. to the round-up camp, but the sorrel was not spared. The impulse that sent Jane Hunter speeding through the darkness had only accumulated strength before the resistance which had restrained it through those dragging days. She was on her way to her lover, to explain in a word the situation that had caused the breach between them. She had fought down the pride that had held

her back, and now her every thought, her every want, was to make Beck know that it was humiliation and injured pride rather than infidelity which had sent him away.

The recollection that she had failed to stand self-possessed before Bobby Cole—a burning, shaming thought yesterday—was relegated to an obscure place in her consciousness. She knew that she had fallen short of the poise her lover would have her retain, the strength and self-control he would wish her to show; but that did not matter now.

Without Beck's love there was nothing in life for her, she had come to believe. She experienced a strange, little-girl feeling as she fled toward the protecting arms that could comfort her and hold her safe from the blackness that covered the rest of the world.

She leaned low on the sorrel's neck and called to him, and he galloped faster and faster through the dying night as her impatience communicated itself to him. Dawn yawned in the east, and the mountains took shape. The road became discernible before her. She drew the excited horse down to a trot and forced herself to force him to conserve some of his splendid energy. Then, a moment later, she urged him forward at a stretching run.

The round-up camp was moving that day. The riders were up, and the first of them had swung off for the work of the morning before she pulled her horse to a stop beside the chuck-wagon.

"He ain't here, ma'am," Oliver replied to her query for Beck.

"Not here?" she said sharply, for she sensed that something was wrong.

"No. He left yesterday. He told me to head this ride."

"Where did he go?"

"I don't know, ma'am." The man studied her face intently, seeing the confusion there, adding it to the evidence he had collected to piece out a theory. "I thought maybe he said something to you about quitting."

"Quitting! You don't mean that!"

"It looks like it, ma'am. I didn't know just how to take what he said. It seems like somethin's got him worried. He wasn't like himself. You wouldn't know him. He said that future plans for this outfit didn't interest him. He said he was leavin', an' it wasn't likely he'd be back; but it wasn't so much what he said as the way he said

it that made me think he was goin' to drift. We all know he's got some pretty active enemies, but it wasn't like Beck to run away from 'em. He left me in charge, an' said I was to take orders from you. He ain't showed up since, and Lord knows where he'd go except out of the country."

Out of the country! Only vaguely did she hear the story of the ruined tank and the questions that Oliver put to her. Out of the country! He had gone, then, thinking that her love had not been a steadfast love, that she was wholly unworthy. He had taken his chance and had lost, and that loss had taken from him even the desire to stay and face the men who would drive him out of the country because he had defended her!

Later, Jane found herself riding homeward, the sorrel at a walk, her mind numb and heavy. Last night it had been a question of love against her pride; she had sacrificed the latter only to find that the sacrifice had been made too late.

She wanted, suddenly, to quit—to quit trying.

She canvassed the situation. She was alone, without a sympathetic individual upon whom to lean. She was the target for forces of evil which sought to undermine her determination to exist in that country. At that, a faint wave of resentment made itself felt. They would continue their campaign—a war against a lone woman!

She realized her position more keenly than she had before, when Beck had been shielding her. Now she stood wholly unprotected. If she was to exist, she *must stand alone!*

Her mind went back to the time when Dick Hilton told her that she could not stand alone, and her resentment became a degree more pronounced. The lethargy, the hopelessness, remained, but behind it was something else—a realization that she had not lost utterly. She had lost the love that she had found, but had she gained no recompense? Yesterday it seemed that the ripest fruits of experience were hers; she had position—menaced, but still hers—she had love. Months before she had abandoned the quest of love, seeking only to stand alone!

She sat at her desk, a spirit of resignation coming as a sort of comfort. If she had lost love, had she lost all that there was in life? No, not that! There was

something else she had found in these months—she had found *herself!*

Tom Beck was gone, his love for her was dead, miles were between them, and she believed she knew him well enough to understand that he had put her forever behind him. She had lost the true fulfilment of life, perhaps; but something remained. And the question came, why not make the best of it? Why not keep what remained? Why not fight for it? Why not stand alone?

Oh, she had not known the strength that had been born of Beck's resistance to her wooing! That morning she believed that she could quit; that she could drift aimlessly, buffeted by vagrant influences; but now she knew that she could not. An impelling force had been started within her which would not down—a driving impulse to keep on, to salvage her self-respect, to wrest from life what remained.

And in this she recognized the quality which Beck had planted in her, which he had nourished and coaxed and made to grow. To keep on would be a rite offered at the shrine of her love for him.

For a moment she cried, and after that a momentary hope was born. He might return; she might even follow and make him understand. She resolutely set that aside. Tom Beck was gone from her life, she told herself, but his influence remained, and could never go. She must fight on alone—fight harder than she ever had fought in her life before. She must remain strong and steadfast in the face of efforts to drive her from the life that she had chosen.

Jane paced the floor nervously, in quick, swinging strides. There was the burning of hay, the breaking of ditches; there was the shooting down of Two-Bits, the destruction of Cathedral Tank; there was the presence in the Hole of the nester and his daughter.

At thought of Bobby Cole a sharp pang shot through her. There was a woman who could dominate! There, perhaps, was the key to the puzzle. Beck had intimated that the conspiracy against her centered about the nester's outfit, and Azariah Beal had been outspoken in his suspicion. Cole himself was a negligible quantity, but the girl was not. The Catamount might hold Jane Hunter's fate in her hand—the hand that had struck her with a quirt!

On her desk lay the envelope that had

held Beck's note; beside it the locket. She paused, picked up the trinket, and studied it as it lay on her small palm. Slowly she lifted it to her lips, clutched it tightly, and then with a catch of breath fastened it about her neck.

She needed her luck, he had written. Yes, she needed her luck!

And even then a rider was speeding across the hills toward her, lashing his horse, crashing through brush, leaping fallen timber, clattering over treacherous ledges to save time. Other men were riding on Jimmy Oliver's orders, bringing the cowboys in from their circles, assembling them in Devil's Hole, where a group of men stood silent and sullen.

Oh, she would fight on, desperate in her determination to crowd the thought of a lost love from her life! She welcomed combat, for it would be as a balm to that gaping wound of loss.

Later she saw the rider come into the ranch on his lathered horse. He flung off at the bunk-house and, a moment later, came running toward her with Curtis at his side. Alarmed, Jane met them at the door.

"They want you in the Hole, ma'am," Curtis said.

"What's the trouble?" she asked—for it could be nothing less than serious trouble which would bring the men in such haste, and she had a vague fear that it pertained to Beck.

"They've got Cole down there with a lot of your calves, an' he's put his brand on 'em. Webb's there, too, an' Hepburn.

(To be concluded in the March number of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE)

They're holdin' 'em all for you to come," the messenger said. He was excited; he breathed rapidly. "Oliver an' Riley agreed you ought to come," he added. "It's your property an' your fight."

Her fight! Her fight, indeed! Perhaps this was the drawing to a head of the forces that had been arrayed against her. The messenger had mentioned Webb and Hepburn as if he considered their presence of significance.

A pinto, this time, bore her away from the ranch, the man, tense and silent, riding beside her. She did not speak as they scrambled up the point and gained the high country, nor did she look at him as they set into a gallop again. An indistinct haze was coming in the west, with a looming thunder-head protruding from it here and there. The wind in their faces was hot and fitful. The scarf about her neck fluttered erratically.

Jane paid little attention to the incidents of that ride. This was her fight, and she was racing toward it with an eagerness born of her determination to retain what she might of the happiness she had striven to win from fate.

And as she rode, Tom Beck, with pieces cut from his chaps bound about his feet to protect them on the long journey by foot, and with his retrieved canteen over his shoulder, limped into the camp. Having taken time to listen to the cook's vague, disconnected story of the discovery that had been made in the Devil's Hole, he borrowed boots, saddled a horse, and rode swiftly away across the hills.

THE HEART'S YEARNING

LITTLE gold bud in the bronze-gold vase,
With your green leaves drooping over,
Half hiding the lines of your pretty face,
Are you dreaming, too, of your lover?

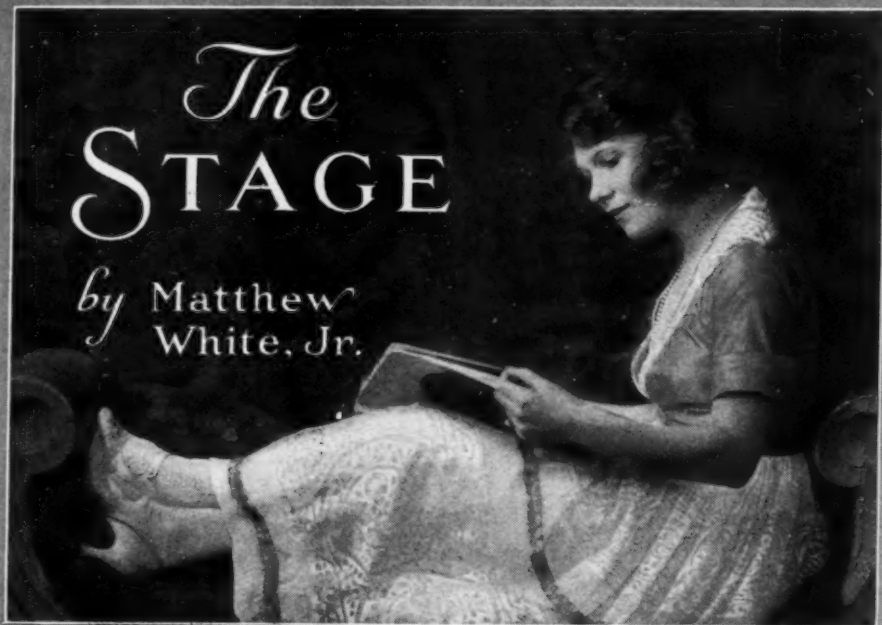
Your lover's a bee in a velvet robe,
A careless and gay young rover;
But a valiant soldier far over the sea—
Ah, that is my own true lover!

I'll open the window and let him in,
The lover for whom you're yearning;
But though I throw doors and windows wide,
My lover is never returning.

Helen Frazee-Bower

The STAGE

by Matthew
White, Jr.



VIVIENNE SEGAL, LEADING WOMAN IN "THE LITTLE WHOPPER," A MUSICAL COMEDY
WITH A REAL PLOT

From a photograph by White, New York

SINCE the New York *Sun* has taken to printing extracts from the dialogue of current successes, I have conceived increased respect for producing managers and a better idea of their difficulties in determining from manuscript what offerings will be likely to get over the footlights. For without exception, when read, the talk seems vapid, commonplace, and dull, whereas the same words, wedded to the action that accompanied them, conveyed the impression of cleverness and snap. Small wonder, then, that famous novelists have seldom made good dramatists. Barrie is one of the shining exceptions.

One reason why Shakespeare reads well is the fact that in his time it was the fashion to talk on the stage in rounded periods, and soliloquies were not tabu. Were he alive to-day he would be obliged to cut his long speeches and to contrive his scenario so as to have but three or four locales at most.

"By my troth, then," I can almost hear him exclaim, "I will go over to the movies, where I can change my sets as often as I like!"

The mere mechanics of writing for the stage are infinitely more difficult for our Augustus Thomas or Avery Hopwood than they were for Shakespeare, whose muse was not circumscribed by scene-shifting limitations. Over and above this, now that grandiloquent phraseology has gone by the board, to be replaced by the realism of every-day talk, it is very difficult to tell in advance whether the dialogue will "get over" or will sound like the mere idle chatter that it seems to be when read.

I wot of two novices who once, having a grand idea for a play, as they thought, set out to write it, but promptly abandoned the task in utter disgust when they came to get their characters on and off the stage. It seemed ridiculous to build a drama out of such commonplaces as "Good morning. How do you do?" or, "Won't you be seated?" or, "I'll be with you in a moment." In a story all this sort of thing can be omitted, but in a play these trivial things must have their place, and though they look like drivel on the printed page, they do not grate upon an audience, if the actors do their work properly. But to do it properly



FLORENCE SHIRLEY, ONE OF THE PRINCIPALS AS MRS. ANNE MERTON
IN THE OPERETTA SENSATION, "APPLE BLOSSOMS"

From a copyrighted photograph by Ira L. Hill, New York

is the rub, and hence the task of authors in the writing, and of managers in the judging, is infinitely harder in the twentieth century than it was in the sixteenth.

Speaking of novelists on the stage, the Theater Guild, an association of actors who last year broke all records in cooperative dramatics by pitching on a success with their second offering, "John Ferguson,"

hugely this portrayal of the folk to whom current topics meant discussion of the Moody and Sankey revivals and the invention of a strange device for carrying the human voice over a wire. Moreover, there was a certain pleasure to be derived from seeing Hackett so far afield from his usual line. I recall him first in college dramatics in 1891, then in the matinée-idol period as

have now followed five weeks of Masfield's "The Faithful" with their first American production. The new piece is "The Rise of Silas Lapham," dramatized by Lillian Sabine from William Dean Howells's well-known novel, published as long ago as 1885.

For this production the Guild went outside its ranks, and secured James K. Hackett to act the name-part. The result was a fine character-study and an interesting reflex of life in the middle seventies, but mighty little drama. Possibly, had the adaptation been made by a regular stage tailor, and with less reverence for its source, a play that moved in the right direction would have resulted. As it stands, the first two of the four acts are by far the most holding, and I am not sure but the secret of their appeal lies solely in the interest awakened by the odd costumes of the period. The talk and the getting on and off stage of the people concerned smack throughout of the amateur.

And yet those whose memory carries them back to the day of the bustle will enjoy



LAURETTE TAYLOR, STARRING IN "ONE NIGHT IN ROME," THE LATEST WORK OF HER HUSBAND, HARTLEY MANNERS

From her latest photograph by Abbe, New York

the *Prisoner of Zenda*, thence via "The Walls of Jericho" to his own production of "Macbeth," three years ago. To behold him now as the New England father in what is probably the best work of America's leading novelist is in a way as surprising as it is gratifying.

There is too little of reverence for traditions in this period of the American theater, when dollars roll easily into box-office windows. All honor, therefore, to the Theater Guild and to Mr. Hackett for this well-deserved tribute to Howells.

Reverting to the Bard for a moment, it may be remembered that some eighteen months ago, when Laurette Taylor made her essay at doing three Shakespeare characters at a special *matinée*, the reviewers did not commend her. This was her reply to their criticism:

"If you are going to make a family Bible out of Shakespeare, do so by all means, but put him on the front-parlor table, and don't attempt to put him on the stage."

She had attempted to approach the master dramatist in a modern spirit, and not through the network of traditions with which he has come to be surrounded.

It isn't many stars, by the bye, who can so faithfully adhere to a program mapped out eighteen months ahead, as Miss Taylor has done. In April, 1918, she announced that her next new play would be presented in New York in the fall of 1919, and that in it she would have "the rôle of an Italian woman of refinement and social distinction—the wife of a diplomat, to be exact." And on December 2, 1919, she returned to the Criterion in "One Night in Rome," written by her husband, Hartley Manners, who provided her with "Peg o' My Heart" and with everything in which she has since appeared.

This long-time foreknowledge of what she was going to do gave Miss Taylor opportunity to make thorough preparation for the character, which included perfecting herself in Italian. To insure this she replaced her colored maid with a young woman from Italy. Do not imagine, however, that "One Night in Rome" is going to bore you with a long lingo of words that you won't understand, just to show how cleverly the star can reel it off. There are only fleeting moments when *L'Enigme*, as the fortune-telling heroine calls herself, speaks Italian, but as a result of Miss Taylor's painstaking work the foreign words

slip trippingly from her tongue, thus preserving the illusion which makes the final surprise all the more effective.

The fortune-telling scene in the first act, "The Future," is admirably managed to avoid monotony, and there is a magic transformation in the apartment that elicits a round of applause. The second act is devoted to "The Present," when we see a practical illustration of the human foible on which Mr. Manners evidently built his play—that of indecision. The final episode concerns "The Past," but the piece does not move backward, in the manner of "On Trial." The title of the last act refers to Miss Taylor's long but skilfully delivered story of what happened "One Night in Rome," when her husband committed suicide at a great function, leaving a note to imply that his wife was the cause.

Here is the sort of play which is beloved of the actor-folk, but which does not invariably meet with the approval of the public. I think there is little doubt that it will do so in this case, however, for Miss Taylor finds in it abundant chance for the display of her powers.

Nor has there been stint in the quality of her support. Philip Merivale, who served as the husband in "The Harp of Life," is once more her leading man in a rôle by no means easy, as it calls upon him not only to switch sweethearts in the course of a very few days, but also to impersonate a spoiled boy grown to man's estate without a normal measure of manly decision. It requires a skilled actor, indeed, to win sympathy for such a part.

Although Miss Taylor is now playing an Englishwoman masquerading as an Italian, she is a New Yorker by birth. She first realized that she had a bent toward the theater by making some small success at church entertainments; but these did not help toward meeting the powers that be in the stage world, which it soon became her ambition to conquer, nor did the removal of herself and her mother to a theatrical boarding-house serve her any better.

She procured her first professional engagement, in what proved to be an obscure vaudeville house in Gloucester, Massachusetts, by answering an advertisement in a dramatic paper; but she made a failure in this environment. A little later, after a brief experience in stock, Mr. Savage offered her a small part in a No. 2 company playing "The Devil," with instructions to



MARY RYAN, LEADING WOMAN IN THE NEW DRAMA BY CHANNING POLLOCK, "THE SIGN ON THE DOOR," ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS "A ROOM AT THE RITZ"

From her latest photograph by White, New York



LILLIAN LORRAINE, WHO WAS IN "THE LITTLE BLUE DEVIL," BUT WHO HAS NOW RETURNED TO THE SCENE OF HER FORMER TRIUMPHS, THE ZIEGFELD MIDNIGHT FROLIC ATOP THE NEW AMSTERDAM THEATER

From her latest photograph by Geisler & Andrews, New York



DOROTHY DALTON, WHO MADE HER REPUTATION IN THE MOVIES, AND WHO IS NOW CHRYSIS, LEADING WOMAN IN "APHRODITE"—SHE STILL POSES FOR THE SCREEN, HER LATEST RELEASE BEING "BLACK IS WHITE," A PARAMOUNT-ARTCRAFT PICTURE FROM THE GEORGE BARR MCCUTCHEON STORY WHICH RAN AS A SERIAL IN THIS MAGAZINE

From a copyrighted photograph by Alfred Cheney Johnston, New York

watch and carefully imitate the girl who was doing it in No. 1. The result was another failure; but Miss Taylor now regards it as about the luckiest fiasco on record, for an engagement with "The Devil" would have lost her the opportunity to go into "Alias Jimmy Valentine," the piece that

first brought her to the attention of Broadway, since when that famous thoroughfare has not been content to lose sight of her for very long.

As to Philip Merivale, he is English, but was born in India, while his father, a civil engineer, was building a railway through



BLANCHE TOMLIN, PRIMA DONNA, AS LADY MARY CARLYLE IN ANDRÉ MESSAGER'S ROMANTIC OPERA,
"M. BEAUCAIRE," AS PRODUCED AT THE NEW AMSTERDAM WITH THE LONDON COMPANY

From a photograph by Puch, New York

the back districts of that country. Some of my readers may recall seeing Genevieve Ward in "Forget-Me-Not." That famous piece was written by the late Herman Charles Merivale, an uncle of Philip. The younger Merivale has played with Tree and Fred Terry in England, and first came to this country with Terry in "The Scarlet Pimpernel"—which, a success of a year or more in London, promptly failed on its presentation in New York.

Laurette Taylor's husband writes her shows. Elsie Janis writes her own. At any rate she has done so in the case of the nameless "bomb-proof revue" with which she has returned to New York after proving the one best bet as an entertainer with the boys "over there." Indeed, it is to her disinclination to separate herself from these same soldier boys that we owe the privilege of having a sample of the sort of thing with which she delighted the A. E. F. in the summer of 1918.

"It was like this," Miss Janis said to me when I went back after her first Wednesday matinée at the Cohan. "When it was over over there, and I had finished a London engagement, I wanted to get back to America to see what it looked like in peace time. I could get any time I wanted to in vaudeville, and Mr. Dillingham was ready to star me in a musical comedy; but somehow it seemed to me that I couldn't go back to that sort of thing—at any rate not just yet—so soon after the experiences I had had with those brave fellows at the front. You should have heard the general outburst of disapproval, though, when I sprang the idea of doing an entertainment of my own of the soldier sort!

"'They're sick of war, Elsie,' everybody assured me. 'It's been done to death.'

"'It will be my funeral then,' was my retort.

"As I was paying for it all out of my own pocket, I finally got my way, and here we are. What New York is going to do with us it is as yet too early to know; but the smaller cities just get the gang from overseas together and come in a body to a show like ours. Manhattan, of course, is too big to have a real community spirit, so I've been really amazed to find the enthusiasm that has already greeted us here."

As for myself, I was amazed at two things about the performance—one, the spontaneity with which Miss Janis gets off her lines, as if they had just popped into

her head; the other, the cleverness of her company, the men of which—most of whom have seen actual service—are playing for the first time as professionals. Indeed, I should not be surprised if one of them—the comedian, Charles Lawrence, who hails from Worcester, Massachusetts—fell into line as a legitimate successor to Eddie Foy.

"I've never seen Foy," he told me. "If it hadn't been for the war, I'd probably have been a clergyman by now. That's what I studied for, you know, at Tufts."

Another member of the "gang" whose name you may hereafter note on theater programs is Jerry Hoekstra, a promising tenor. Still another is Herbert Goff, a Wisconsin boy, who was on the battle-ship Utah when Elsie first ran across him, and who has sung in the choir at St. Bartholomew's, one of the well-known Episcopal churches of New York. Besides the boys, there are what the house bill calls "six rather nice accessories" in the Janis show, headed by Eva Le Gallienne as the *Parisienne*. The entire outfit provides an entertainment along such original lines as to justify the commendatory comments one hears as the audience files out—in striking contrast to the utter silence which accompanies the dispersing of the crowds who go to see "Aphrodite," for which the top box-office price for seats at the Century opening was ten dollars.

Not that this elaborate spectacle, imported from Paris, is not very beautiful. It is, the colors in scenery and costumes being a veritable feast for the eye—the scenery being provided by the Harkers of London, the costumes by Percy Anderson and Leon Bakst. There were reports of a startling exhibition of nudity, but the show does not live up to this questionable sort of advertisement, for even Mildred Walker, in the name-part as the statue, the goddess of love, is clothed in a one-piece union suit—or was, after the opening night. The result is a curious apathy on the part of the audiences that gather to view "Aphrodite"—a sort of "what came we out for to see that we haven't seen?" attitude. Palpably they are not the people to appreciate the beautiful color-effects achieved in the seven sets of the three acts that go to make up the slow-moving story of degenerate Alexandria, written by Pierre Louys, and produced in Paris before the war.

The surprise of the occasion was the excellence of Dorothy Dalton, who was



ELMA MOORE, IN THE SUPPORT OF CHARLES CHERRY AND FRANCINE LARRIMORE IN "SCANDAL,"
ONE OF THE SEASON'S SUCCESSES

From a photograph by White, New York

plucked from the movies for reasons of personal pulchritude, as the heroine, *Chrysis*. She proved quite capable of getting her lines over the footlights even in so spacious an auditorium as the Century.

It pleased me to see the big house filled from "pit to dome"—a state of things that has seldom or never prevailed in this finest of all New York's theaters. The

Century affords an appropriate setting for this richly outfitted "romance of manners in ancient Egypt." For the sculptor, *Demetrios*, Comstock & Gest selected McKay Morris from Stuart Walker's Portmanteau Theater. A far cry from the *Charley's Aunt* he used to be is Étienne Girardot's physician to the queen, while another familiar name cropping up in the bewildering



BELLE STORY, LEADING WOMAN AT THE HIPPODROME, NOW APPEARING IN ITS GREATEST SUCCESS, "HAPPY DAYS"

From a photograph by Abbe, New York



JUNE WALKER, INGÉNUÉ WITH CLIFTON CRAWFORD AS THE SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN THE FARCE HIT, "MY LADY FRIENDS"

From a photograph by Ira D. Schwarz

list of "Aphrodite" participants is that of Lucille LaVerne, well known for her negro delineations, but appearing here as a Greek prophetess.

The Century version of the play—a much expurgated one—was prepared by Pierre Frondale and George C. Hazelton, the latter of whom wrote "Mistress Nell" for Henrietta Crosman. The music is by Henri Fevrier and Anselm Goetz, while for the arrangement of the dances, notably that of the Bacchante revels, Mr. Gest went to his fellow-countryman, Michel Fokine, creator of the Russian ballet. Owing to the impending production of another spectacle, "Mecca," the run of "Aphrodite" at the Century is to end on February 7, when it goes to Chicago.

Although "My Lady Friends" contains only ten characters and two scenes, in contrast to the hundreds of people and seven sets going to make up "Aphrodite," the latter was made ready in about six months following Mr. Gest's trip abroad last spring, while the farce in which H. H. Frazee presented Clifton Crawford on the night following the Century *première* was more than two years in reaching its present form. Originally a book called "Oh, James!" it was made into a play by Emil Nyitray, and was acted under that name a couple of seasons ago, without agitating any booking-office with a wild desire to give it Broadway dates.

A little later it was resurrected under a new name, "Four Queens," again without creating a ripple on the theatrical seas. Then Mr. Decker, of the Frazee offices, chanced to recollect that he had seen Frank Mandel leave the Atlantic City theater where "Oh, James!" was first tried out, and had heard him mutter:

"Why doesn't somebody give me a chance at a piece like that?"

So Mr. Decker suggested collaboration by Mandel to Mr. Frazee. Meanwhile, a chance visit to a vaudeville house where Crawford was appearing brought up the latter's name for the leading character, that of the prosperous business man whose grievance is that his wife won't spend money fast enough. Not unnaturally, it was a question whether the late star of "Her Soldier Boy" and "The Quaker Girl" would be willing to appear in a songless piece; but they found him only too ready to make this nearer approach to the legitimate, and the result is a hit.



NANCY FAIR, IN THE NEW FARCE, "READY TO OCCUPY"

From a photograph by the Campbell Studio, New York



LAURA HAMILTON, LEADING WOMAN IN THE NEW MUSICAL COMEDY, "BETTY, BE GOOD"

From a copyrighted photograph by the Hixon-Connolly Studio, Kansas City

As the printer of Bibles, ever ready to listen to the sad story of a young lady in distress, Crawford has a wonderful part. He has one song, to which he plays his own accompaniment, and in which he is joined by June Walker, who would have been called a "broiler" once had she appeared in a musical show. She is only sixteen, and first-nighters fell hard for this dainty young New Yorker, whom they saw last winter in "The Little Journey," but failed to no-

tice particularly. She also appeared in "The Betrothal," Maeterlinck's sequel to "The Blue Bird."

Another outstanding feature of "My Lady Friends" is Teresa Maxwell Conover, as the lawyer's wife who avers that the only way to keep a husband faithful is to keep him broke. A line likely to linger in the mind is the dictum that "a wife talks, while a sweetheart listens"—a bit of philosophy one does not expect to find in farce.

Following a six-months' run of the *Follies* at the New Amsterdam, now under the management of Erlanger, Dillingham and Ziegfeld, the bevy of girls in that spectacular show were displaced by a preponderance of men in "*M. Beaucaire*," the romantic opera by the French composer, André Messager, produced by Gilbert Miller, in London, with great éclat last Easter. Fortunately there is every reason to indicate that this musical version of the famous Booth Tarkington novel and play will prove equally popular here, despite the high class into which it falls and the current belief that only jazz and the feminine form divine are potent at the box-office.

With the exception of Maggie Teyte, who created *Lady Mary Carlyle*, young Mr. Miller—now a big figure in London theatricals—brought over the original company. In this, as it happens, two Americans filled leading parts—Marion Green as *Beaucaire*, and Robert Parker as that arch-villain, the *Duke of Winterset*. Both Mr. Green and John Clarke, a capital tenor who sings *Philip Molyneux*, score high vocally, while Lennox Pawle, happily remembered for his work in "*Pomander Walk*," brings his keen sense of humor to the delineation of *Frederick Bantison*. After the commonplace stuff of most of the recent musical comedies, the music of "*Beaucaire*" seems really heaven-sent, and ranks the opera even above "*Apple Blossoms*" as one of the happier incidents of this remarkable season.

The week following "*Beaucaire*" brought to New York another London hit with more than a tinge of Americanism in it, and one also in which men predominate. It seems odd that the best play on one of our national heroes, Abraham Lincoln, should have been written by an English poet and brought out first in England. John Drinkwater, now on a visit to the United States, says that he regards Lincoln as the greatest man since Cromwell. He devoted two years to a special study of the martyred President, but the drama itself he wrote in a little more than the same number of weeks. The result was a work which, produced at the outlying Lyric Theater, in Hammersmith, last February, has been drawing crowds from all over London, and which met with a brilliant reception here on its presentation at the Cort in mid-December.

And yet, in the strictest sense of the word, "*Lincoln*" is not a play at all, merely a series of scenes—six of them—setting

forth high lights in the career of a very great man who was also so humble that when the nomination for the Presidency was offered him he sent the committee out of the room and knelt at the table in prayer for guidance in his heavy responsibility. It is on this episode that the first curtain falls.

Later we see the President and his Cabinet debating such matters as the defense of Fort Sumter and the signing of the emancipation proclamation, and we note the quaint simplicity of the man when he makes his advisers listen to the newest Artemus Ward anecdote in order to give their minds brief relaxation. Perhaps the most impressive episode theatrically is that which finds him at Grant's headquarters near Appomattox on the night preceding Lee's surrender, when he pardons a young soldier who has been found asleep on post. The latter begs to be sent into action at once, so Lincoln gives him a letter to Meade, and later learns that the boy was killed almost immediately. The President passes this crucial night asleep on two chairs, and we see Grant cover him gently with a military cloak so as not to wake the man who was always so thoughtful of others.

William Harris, Jr., who brought this remarkable play to America, found through his stage director, Lester Lonergan, a wonderful actor for the part—Frank McGlynn, who is fifty years old, and who used to act with some of the Charles Frohman companies. Not only does he look Lincoln with almost startling similitude, but he brings to the portrayal a sense of dignity and reserve power which it takes something more than mere talent to convey. This is, in short, a really great impersonation. That it should have been successfully put over by an actor whose name has not hitherto rung loudly in the halls of fame is all the more matter of congratulation, not only to McGlynn himself, but to the public, which has been so quick to recognize innate ability.

The reception of the play in New York must of necessity be different in certain details from the attitude of its London audiences, even though it is a huge success in both cities. For instance, laughter, followed by wild applause, follows General Grant's act of taking a drink of whisky. There is another significant moment when General Lee steps on the stage, and the prolonged applause that greets the gray uniform and its gallant wearer testifies to the happy healing of old wounds.

Light Verse

AN OPTIMIST'S VALENTINE

FAIR damsel, I've selected you
From all this world of women, to
Become my Valentine!
But if for reasons of your own
You still prefer to live alone,
And my fond prayers decline,
I shall not pine away with grief,
Nor fade like to an autumn leaf.
Nay, instantaneously,
With keener zest, I'll set about
To find—with better luck, no doubt—
A new affinity!

Mary W. Havens

WHEN LOVE COMES

LAST year the stars were only stars,
The rain was only rain,
And days and nights were endless hours
Upon an endless chain.

Now is the rain a silver song,
The red rose is a flame,
And all the stars are golden fires
Emblazoning your name!

Susan Myra Gregory

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

NOW up, now down the female form divine
The waist-line skips;
Sometimes it cuddles 'neath her shoulder-blades,
Anon it slips
Down to the knees—then, presto, up again
To gird the hips!

'Tis well one's whole anatomy is not
Thus apt to change;
Suppose that she whose brains are in her feet
Could rearrange
Herself? That would be wonderful, and more
Than passing strange!

Masie V. Caruthers

A QUESTION OF BONES

WHEN life for Jim had just begun,
At school you'd hear him say:
"I wish I had my lessons done!
I wish 'twas holiday!"

Sometimes he'd wish he was a man,
With studies well behind him;
But soon or late, as sure as fate,
Still wishing you would find him.

When school was o'er, and work began,
Jim kept on wishing still:
"I wish I was a wealthy man!
I wish I'd paid this bill!"
No matter what came up or when,
Jim's wish was ever ready;
He seemed to think that, swim or sink,
A wish would keep things steady.

Like other men, Jim got a wife—
How, no one ever guessed;
But still he tried to run his life
By wishing for the best.
"Your wish-bone," Mary cried one day,
"Is quite without an equal;
But who'll supply the backbone?—I!"
Well, you can guess the sequel.

William Wallace Whitelock

OF ALL THE GIRLS

OF all the girls I've ever known
Cornelia was the tallest;
Theresa sang with sweetest tone,
And Stella was the smallest.

Matilda had the meanest ma,
Dolores was the saddest;
Patricia had the richest pa,
And Mabel was the maddest.

Though Vera's verse was known to fame,
And Sue was stylish-looking,
Dear Kate, to whom I gave my name,
Was quite the best at cooking!

Harold Seton

THEN AND NOW

WHEN you were six and I was ten—
Those days when you wore frocks and
frills,
And knickers gave me wondrous thrills—
I was a despot king, for then
Mine was the voice that held command,
And you were servant maid, who went
To do my bidding, well content
With guerdon of my sheltering hand.

But now that you are fair eighteen
And I am ancient twenty-two,
What witchery or magic brew
Makes me a slave and you a queen?
For I who ruled must now obey
Your slightest wish; your fleeting ire
Is punishment more dread than fire,
A smile from you the richest pay.

Paul Edwin Hollister

DAN CUPID'S DAY

THIS is sly Dan Cupid's day;
See him in his old array!
Round about him perking sparrows;
In his hand a sheaf of arrows.
In despite of all the sages;
He's not changed much through the ages.

Who would change him? Doubters, fie!
Sweetheart, neither you nor I!

This is sly Dan Cupid's day;
Still he fares the olden way,
And from out his brimming coffers
Love is yet the meed he offers;
And though some may whisper "money,"
Still his darts are tipped with honey.

Who would change him? Doubters, fie!
Sweetheart, neither you nor I!

Clinton Scollard

TWO MEN AND A WOMAN

BECAUSE a woman's lips were red,
Because a woman's breast was white,

One man went forth into the fight,
To follow where the battle led;
And girded with resistless might
He won a kingdom for his right.

Because a woman's lips were red,
Because a woman's breast was white,

One man went forth, his soul alight
With the radiance her beauty shed;
And wandering through the silent night,
He made a song for her delight.

The kingdom now is dust—thereof
Nothing is left save desert sand;
The song in many a foreign land
In many a tongue proclaims its love—

How once a woman's lips were red,
How once a woman's breast was white.

Paul Tanaquil

LOVE'S CHARM

SLOWLY up the hill they ramble,
All absorbed in love's first charm;
To the very top they ramble—
Arm in arm.

Slowly down the hill they wander,
Thrilled with life and love's long charm;
To the very base they wander—
Arm in arm.

Lillian Eichler

AN ECHO OF THE COAL SHORTAGE

THE white lights, the bright lights,
They flash along Broadway,
Making night like day;
But when they ceased to shimmer,
To throb or gently glimmer,
The city, like a gray-robed nun,
Seemed kneeling down to pray.

There was a hint of sadness, a little lull of
gladness,
A half-suppressed emotion,
Like under-tides of ocean,
Soft flowing through the street;
And those who walked it seemed to be
Touched with a transient gravity—
The thought of things unseen.

William Hamilton Hayne

HIS OPPOSITE

"AS a rule you find it a lucky hit
If you happen to marry your opposite
That being the case, I wish," said Brown,
"To marry the richest girl in town."

Eugene C. Dolson

THE POET DREAMS OF SPRING

WHEN spring arrives, I'll seize my pen
With feverish élan—
I wonder how the word's pronounced,
And what will rime with that?

I'll smite my lyre, attune it higher,
And make the welkin ring;
For I shall feel the cosmic urge
That gets me every spring.

My rumpled hair and glassy stare
Will show that I'm inspired;
These bubbling, burbling, babbling thoughts
Of spring-time make me tired!

My work I'll drop, I'll quit the shop,
To gaze upon the sky—
Alas, the boss is watching me
With murder in his eye!

If I say more, the boss will roar—
And you can guess the rest;
But come what may, I've got to get
This poem off my chest!

Ralph Lusk

The Odd Measure

The Wealth of Our American Deserts

Where Pioneers Perished of Thirst, Chemistry Finds Rich Treasure

SAGE-BRUSH and alkali! Arid wastes that terrorized the imagination of the stay-at-home during the fury and excitement of the forty-niners' rush for gold, and later when the homesteaders pressed steadily westward and made the so-called Great American Desert, from the Missouri to the Rockies, a cultivated field of a million square miles!

Now, after the soil experts and the irrigation engineers have turned so much of the supposed desert into a garden, what is left of it is coming under the beneficent rule of the Bureau of Chemistry. As a result, the dreaded Death Valley is yielding salts and borax and strange minerals that quicken the life of industry and stir the heart of commerce. Out of western Nebraska's bitter waters are drawn oils and alkalies, potashes and what not.

What would those old prairie-schooner travelers think to see the desolate and forbidding tracts, where the pioneers risked their lives, turned into power for automobiles and material for the making of the millionaires of chemical research?

When men were rushing for the free gold of California's placer-fields, and pouring down into the beautiful land where John Marshall found the first nugget, weary travelers stopped in the most barren spots on their westward journey, and found the equivalent of gold in stones that broke wagons and in bitter lakes that permitted animals to perish of thirst.

Nevada's bleak alkali deserts may serve the nation some day as the silver-mines of Virginia City served it during the Civil War. What chemist could cross Carson Sink and not thrill with wonder and vision at that vast deposit of who knows what stored-up benefits for humanity?

* * * * *

The Awkward Vagaries of Our Calendar

A Peruvian Reformer Has a Plan to Set Them Right

TIME is one of those much-abused concepts of physics that is supposed to have been revolutionized by Professor Einstein's discovery. Time is no longer an absolute autocrat, but a very limited and relative monarch. Earth time may not be planetary time or universe time, but as earth inhabitants, we have to make the best of it, in spite of Professor Einstein. It is still true that an hour is a complete revolution of the large hand of the clock, that a day is twenty-four such revolutions, that a week is seven days, and so on; but we have always had difficulties with the calendar. We have had the Julian calendar, the Gregorian calendar, new style and old style, and, as every schoolboy knows, an elaborate set of tables and rules for calculating on what day of the week June 18, 1815, fell. Yet every one agrees that our present almanac is unscientifically and inconveniently arranged, with its months of varying lengths and its shifting holidays.

Now comes Carlos A. Hesse, a native of Peru, who would simplify all that by a new division of the earth year. He proposes to divide our year of three hundred and sixty-five days into thirteen months of twenty-eight days each, with one day over, which he calls Zero Day, or New Year's Day, and in leap-years two days over, the second extra day being Double Zero Day in his calendar. The months are to remain as now from January to December, the additional month, to be called Trecember, coming between December and January. Zero Day would belong to no month, and would come between Trecember 28 and January 1.

The month, according to Hesse's plan, would be divided into four weeks of seven days, the year into fifty-two weeks. The first day of each century, of each year, of each month, and of each week would be Monday. Every

hundred years, at the end of the century, Double Zero Day would be suppressed, and seven years would pass without a Leap-Year Day, except when the number of the secular year is divisible by four hundred, as, for instance, the year 2000. All months would have four Mondays, all years fifty-two Mondays, and the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd of each month would be Monday in all years for all centuries to come.

Mr. Hesse is confident that his scheme will appeal to business men. He suggests that for business and banking purposes Zero Day and Double Zero Day shall be *dies non*—that is, shall not count as valid days in regard to the maturing of commercial transactions. He would further divide the year into half-years of twenty-six weeks and quarters of thirteen weeks each, bills of exchange to be drawn at twenty-eight, fifty-six, or eighty-four days' sight.

* * * * *

The Strange
Adventures
of Thomas
Lawrence

*A Modest Teacher
at Oxford, a
Prince in the
Near East*

COLONEL THOMAS LAWRENCE is back in Oxford, where he teaches Arabic and archeology. He may be seen any day on the High Street in his don's gown, a peaceful, modest figure—a small man, beardless, and about five feet three inches in height; yet it was he who called the new Arab kingdom into being during the world war.

The beginning of the war chanced to find Lawrence pottering about the Euphrates, studying the Babylonian ruins. He offered his services to the British government, and the War Office fortunately told him to see what he could do in Arabia. The Arabs attached him to the staff of Prince Feisul, son of the King of Hedjaz, where he succeeded in mustering a white-robed force of two hundred thousand native soldiers, whom he eventually led through northern Arabia up to Palestine. There he joined General Allenby, helped to take Damascus, and became its first governor under the new régime. The Arabs called him *sherif*, or prince, served him with implicit obedience, and loudly lamented his departure from the East.

The fascination of the East for Lawrence, and the spell he exercised over the sons of the desert, recall the adventures of Lady Hester Stanhope, Richard Burton, and Charles Gordon.

Lawrence, who is still a young man in the thirties, was known before the war only to a small circle of archeological experts. He has the rank of colonel, and the right to wear many military decorations; but we are told that when he got out of his Arab dress and into military uniform, he did not know what insignia he should have on his shoulder-straps, and that he was incapable of saying, "Form fours!" The Arabs, however, seem to have discovered some magic quality in him, to have recognized some temperamental power which he was fortunate enough to turn to the advantage of the Allies when war held the balance in the East.

* * * * *

Beatty,
Fisher, and
Beresford

*Three Popular
Figures of the
British Navy*

ADMIRAL BEATTY is now known in England as the "newspaper admiral," his engaging personality and up-to-the-minute qualities having won him that distinction from Admiral Fisher, who long divided it with the late Admiral Beresford.

Not without an effort has Lord Fisher resigned his popularity, and his recent memoirs, published in the *London Times*, are sparks from the old flint. Fisher was born in 1841, the same year as the late King Edward—"a good vintage year," he tells us. He began life in extremely humble circumstances. In childhood he lived with a grandfather whose poverty compelled him to take in lodgers; and some of these comparative strangers, in their charity, gave the boy bread spread with butter, while his staple food was boiled rice with brown sugar. In the end he brought society to heel and sported with kings and grand duchesses. He quarreled with Winston Churchill over the expedition to the Dardanelles, and left the Admiralty in the summer of 1915.

"I backed him up till I resigned; I'd do the same again," he says of Churchill. "He had courage and imagination; he was a war man."

Fisher's son married a Philadelphia girl, and the old admiral recalls with glee that when he came over for the wedding the Pullman porters addressed him as "Mr. Lord Fisher." The best speech he ever heard, he says, was made by an American admiral visiting Bermuda. It was short and to the point:

"It was a damned fine hen that hatched the American eagle!"

Beresford sprang into fame on the Condor, during the attack upon the forts of Alexandria in 1882—or it may be more truthful to say that Frederic Villiers, the war-correspondent, who happened to be aboard, made the young sailor famous. He was a high-spirited and likable lad. As a midshipman, while stationed in West Indian waters, he went ashore with a party of chums on the island of Trinidad, and seeing the image of an eagle over the door of a prominent house there, his impish nature could not resist the impulse to play a prank. Up the wall climbed Beresford and down came the eagle, to the cheers of the middies.

Next morning there was alarm on the island. A party of Britishers had insulted the Stars and Stripes by forcibly removing the eagle from the American consul's dwelling. The captain of the ship held an investigation, and the criminal was discovered. Young Beresford was ordered to carry the eagle back, to bring a ladder, a hammer, and a box of nails, and in the presence of the town and the assembled ship's company, to refix the bird on its perch, while the captain made a speech on the greatness of the American people. The incident closed amicably with the consul dining on the ship.

* * * * *

An American Viscount's Hobbies

*The Late Lord
Astor's Costly
Estates and
Expensive
Journalism*

THE late Lord Astor will always live in literature, not for the articles he published in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, his own property, but as the hero of Rudyard Kipling's story, "An Error in the Fourth Dimension." He was a man who liked to have his own way, and other errors of various dimensions were popularly attributed to him.

When he was plain Mr. William Waldorf Astor, he printed an announcement in the London newspapers that a certain colonel, who had attended a reception at his house, had come there uninvited. The colonel had been taken to the reception by a titled lady, whose guest he was, and who thought she could vouch for his welcome. The affair was not smoothed over until King Edward, then Prince of Wales, intervened.

Among the English estates bought by Astor was Hever Castle, once the home of Anne Boleyn, a moated Plantagenet fortress that had fallen to the low estate of a farmhouse. He restored it under the best antiquarian advice, and eventually he took his title from it, in spite of some opposition voiced by the press. A country road was diverted to add to the seclusion of the castle, and the grounds were surrounded by two miles of high fencing, shutting it in so completely that the wags of London referred to the place as "a very walled-off Astoria."

He also purchased Cliveden, on the Thames, from the Duke of Westminster, and restored it lavishly. On the terrace overlooking the river was set up the famous balustrade and fountain from the Villa Borghese in Rome. From the Borghese, too, came eight sarcophagi which he used as flower-stands, and a bronze group after the manner of John of Bologna was set up to decorate a chalk-pit at the end of the lawn. Paintings by Reynolds and Romney adorned the staircase within.

Astor's odd tastes showed themselves in his London office, on the Embankment, where he had a bedroom with a golden ceiling, the walls being inlaid with precious woods. It was there that he edited the *Pall Mall Gazette* and wrote for the *Pall Mall Magazine*. No paper was ever

carried on with less regard for money than the *Gazette* under Astor; its staff included some of the most brilliant amateur and professional writers of the time. A man who had left the office once said of it:

"In my time, the annual loss was forty thousand pounds. Since then, they have spared no expense whatever."

* * * * *

The Woes of Nicholas of Montenegro

*At Seventy-Eight
He Finds Himself
in Exile and
Penniless*

THERE have been many moving tales about the hardships of kings in exile, and a new crop of tragedies may grow from the unhappy experiences of the fugitive princes and princelings of the former German Empire. Of all the recently dethroned monarchs, however, perhaps the most distressful case is that of one who was on the winning and not the losing side of the world war—Ex-King Nicholas of Montenegro.

Nearly a year ago a brief article in this department commented on the practical expulsion of the royal house of Petrovitch from the land of the Black Mountain. After ruling that tiny but historic domain since 1697, as bishops, as princes, and finally as kings, the dynasty came to an end with Nicholas I, who ignominiously fled from the invading Austrians in the second year of the great war, and whose unpopularity was such that at the close of the struggle the national council notified him that he need not trouble to return.

It is now reported from Paris that the aged Nicholas is in dire straits. He has hitherto been able to maintain some sort of a court at Neuilly, in the western suburbs of the French capital, with money allowed him by the treasuries of France and Great Britain; but not long ago he was informed that neither government, at a time when public expenditures must be rigorously scrutinized, cares to continue its generosity to a man who has no political standing and no personal prestige, and whose loyalty to the Allies was always more or less under suspicion. Indeed, both he and his sons, the Princes Danilo and Mirko, have been definitely charged with treachery in so readily surrendering to the Austrians the almost impregnable fastnesses which the Montenegrins had defended for centuries against every attempted invasion of their mountain land.

Be that as it may, in his seventy-ninth year Nicholas is said to be practically penniless and without any visible prospect of financial assistance. His daughter is the wife of the King of Italy, but Victor Emmanuel is understood to have long ago cut off all relations with his discredited father-in-law. The elderly exile's plight is indeed a pitiable one.

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Denikin, the Foe of the Russian Reds

*Born a Peasant,
He Now Com-
mands a Great
Army in Southern
Russia*

EVER since the overthrow of the Czar, the civilized world has looked for a man to save Russia. There have been disappointments—at first the Grand Duke Nicholas, Brusiloff, and Kerensky; more recently Admiral Kolchak, and after him Denikin.

Alexander Kolchak, a sea-soldier, seems to have practised a ruthless sway in Siberia, and to have been a man of violent and tyrannous methods, so that one by one the muzhiks dropped away from him. Vassili Denikin, on the contrary, is himself a glorified muzhik who holds his men together by drink and prayer. He has been joined by all manner of chieftains—among them Mamontoff, Skouro, Wrangel, and Ulegai, the Circassian—so that his total force is said to number about four hundred thousand men.

Long ago, the Denikins were gentry. Vassili's grandfather fled to the Caucasus in the reign of Nicholas I, and acquired some oil lands there; but his father gambled away the family estate, and young Denikin had to shift for himself among the peasants, whose fatalism and piety he shares. At one of the Russian military academies he was a laughing-stock, and failed to graduate; but after the revolution he got a command in Korniloff's army, and was taken prisoner by the Red Guards. His captors spat on

him and kicked him, but the ill-dressed, slow-speaking, heavy-bearded, brown-eyed man took it all as part of the day's work, and has forgotten it.

He holds his hordes together mainly by religion, ruling by what has been called Cromwellian paternalism. The muzhiks pray continually, and Denikin is described as the champion prayer of them all. French officers who have been attached to his staff say that his influence over his men is uncanny. He has been known to sit down and play *ocke*, a Russian card game, with drunken mutineers, then pray with them, scold them, and finally whip them into line. There is little or no trench-fighting where his army operates; but guerrilla tactics on a reckless scale and ferocious raids by his Kuban and Terek Cossacks into Bolshevik territory mark his advance or retreat on the road to Moscow, the Mecca of Muscovy.

Captain E. W. Crane, of the United States army, who has been with Denikin's Cossacks, is eloquent in praise of Skouro, the cavalry leader. Skouro is thirty-two years old, and was a lieutenant in the Czar's army. In 1918 he fled before the Bolsheviks to the Caucasus, where he gathered a small force of irregulars and harassed the passing Bolshevik troops in the hills. His men made themselves caps from wolf-skins, and were soon a terror to the Reds who called them "Skouro's wolves." Recruits came in until Skouro was able to muster a regiment and join Denikin, who made him a general. His cavalry is now said to number forty thousand men, most of them as reckless as himself.

Denikin is in no hurry. Time is on his side, he says, and in Russia sloth is every man's sister.

* * * * *

Horses' Names in French Politics

*How Official
Vigilance Foiled
a Pacifist
Horse-Breeder*

THEY have no word in France for efficiency, but they have the thing itself. It used to be the boast of the minister of education that he could look upon the clock on his desk in Paris, at any moment of the day, and say that at that hour all the school-children of France were busy at dictation, or, it might be, geography. That was before the war. The minister of agriculture is no less efficient after the war, and a recent incident in his ministry proves it.

Among the duties incumbent on M. de la Fouchardière, besides building up the ruined agriculture of France—its vineyards, its beet-fields, and its war-beaten meadows—is that of keeping an eye on the stud-farms and registering the names of the thoroughbreds. An amusing correspondence, just come to light, shows that a horse-breeder with a farm near Compiègne, where Marshal Foch delivered to the Germans the terms of the armistice, decided to call one of his latest colts "À Bas la Guerre" (Down with War). He so notified the local director of agriculture, in order that the animal might be duly registered; but the director refused to accept the name, because of the sinister interpretation that might be put on it.

"Kindly be so good," his polite reply ran, "as to delete the words 'down with,' or find a new name altogether."

The breeder appealed to the minister; the minister sided with his subordinate, and the pacifist farmer had to give in. Then he suggested "Wilson the Just" as an alternative, but the ministry has an unbreakable rule that the names of celebrated men cannot be given to race-horses. Driven to patriotic desperation, the owner of the colt suggested a triple choice of titles for the possible future winner at Longchamps—"Vive la République" (Long Live the Republic), "Vive l'Armée" (Long Live the Army), and "Vive la Paix" (Long Live Peace).

The ministry, in the end, allowed him the choice of "Vive la République" or "Vive l'Armée." The correspondence, as published in the *Progrès Civique*, does not show which name was chosen, but the efficient vigilance of the agricultural authorities had prevented the registration of a name that might savor of defeatism or of spoofing the government.

How the Right Man Is Sometimes Found

A BRIEF PRACTICAL LESSON IN THE VALUE OF ECONOMY, A VIRTUE WHICH IS
SPECIALLY DESIRABLE BUT LAMENTABLY RARE AT THE PRESENT TIME

By Judson D. Stuart

EVANS, division superintendent of a certain big railroad, was not at all satisfied with his storekeeper. Each railroad division has its store, where supplies are kept and given out to the various departments. In these stores are everything from matches to dynamos. If a brakeman needs a new lantern, he gets it at the store. If the manager of the railroad restaurant needs a new Wilton carpet or a new salt-shaker, he goes to the store. Paints and brushes, brooms and dust-rags, kerosene and gasoline, screws and nails, tools and furniture, machinery and stationery—in fact, everything that is needed in a railroad division, anywhere from the freight-yard to the super's desk—can be found in the store.

Evans was not satisfied with the way things were running in his store. In the first place, there was too much waste. His reports showed that the supply bills of his division were too high.

"What I need," he complained to his assistant, "is a man with some sense of economy. If a carpenter is going to put up a coat-hanger in a switchman's shanty, the storekeeper will give him enough nails and screws and coat-hooks to supply coat-racks for a hotel, instead of a nine-by-nine shanty. And if one of our painters is going to touch up a three-foot scratch on a passenger-coach that has been side-wiped, the storekeeper gives him a new brush, a quart of varnish, and a pint of stain—enough to finish the whole side of the car. What is left over is chucked aside in the paint-shop, where it dries up and becomes worthless."

"I should think that could be fixed all right, Mr. Evans," his assistant said.

"Fire your storekeeper, and hunt up a more economical man."

"How would you find him? By the color of his eyes, or by stopping the first man you happen to meet down in the yard and asking him if he is economical?" asked Evans.

The assistant didn't know.

John Harris stood on a raft in the ferry-slip and hammered away at a barrel of tar with an ax, knocking the head in. They were heating the tar and swabbing the sides of the slip with it, for the protection of the big timbers when the ferry-boats came bumping and sliding in.

Superintendent Evans was standing on a boat in the adjoining slip, idly watching the workmen. His division ended at the ferry, and the railroad's marine department had charge of that.

As fast as Harris knocked in the head of a barrel, he picked the boards out and tossed them into the water.

Michael Fessendon was keeping the fire hot under the melting-pot, which was set on a bed of ashes. Behind him was a stack of wood. Michael had nothing to do for a moment, so he took a rake and fished up the tar-covered bits that had made up the barrel-head. They were sticky with tar, but Michael rescued them, placed them in a pile, and at the proper time fed them to the fire under the melting-pot.

Superintendent Evans changed his mind about going across on the ferry-boat. He went back and met Grayson, of the marine department.

"Hey, Grayson! Please find out for me who that chap is down there on the raft, feeding the fire," said Evans.

Grayson sent a man down the slip, and he came back with the information. Evans went across the yard and into his own office, but was back on the slip at the noon-hour.

"How much do you get here, Mike?" asked the division superintendent when the fire-tender climbed up with the others to get his dinner-pail.

"Two dollars a day," said Mike.

"Been to school?"

"Oh, yes—grammar-school."

"Now tell me this, Mike—why were you wasting time fishing up those tar-covered barrel-heads when you had plenty of wood on the raft?"

This time Evans appeared quite stern, and Michael, sniffing a coming storm, was a bit worried.

"Why, sir," he said apologetically, "I wasn't exactly wasting time. You see I couldn't do any more to the fire, and it seemed a shame to throw away all that good wood with the tar on it, because it makes such a roaring fire. It's so much saved, too, for it must cost something to

get up enough wood to keep those tar-pots running."

"How would you like to be assistant storekeeper on my division, starting at four dollars a day?"

"I'll begin this noon," said Michael earnestly.

"Finish your day and I'll get you transferred. I need a man just like you. Report to me to-morrow, and I'll tell you just what I mean."

Six months later Michael was head storekeeper on Evans's division. Some may contend that it was Michael's opportunity, of which he made the most, in his economy in saving the heads of the tar-barrels; but it was Superintendent Evans who really knew opportunity when he saw it, and he made the most of it. While Evans was the means of helping Michael to double his earnings, and more, he did far more than that when he grasped the opportunity of securing an economical man. He saved his division more than ten times Michael's salary every year.

THE SECRET OF THE WOODS

THE secret of the woods lies close,
Behind a thousand leafy doors;
The mountain laurel and the rose
Make fair the winding corridors
Through which my frequent footstep goes
Along the velvet mossy floors.

The rustling arras swings aside,
And swings behind me, as I fare;
But still the woods their secret hide—
Yet is it whispered everywhere.

Yes, every creature there, save I,
Knows it by heart—the bee could tell,
Had it a mind; the butterfly
Floats with it painted on its wings;
Even the woodchuck knows it well,
And nothing else the catbird sings.

Would I were as these soulless things,
These beings of the element,
Soulless yet all of spirit blent—
Wild essences of fire and dew;
Then had mine ears been more attent,
And I had known the secret, too!

Nicholas Breton

The Fliers

BY WILL MACMAHON

Illustrated by Stockton Mulford

HE that was to become king of the condors broke from the solitary shell in a rude nest of sticks and stones built precariously on the lava crest of Mount Coquimba's crater, fifteen thousand feet above sea-level. This extinct volcano is on the line of the equator, and stands near the shore of the Pacific Ocean in southernmost Colombia, South America.

For the first few weeks after his hatching the nestling resembled a crawling reptile rather than a flying bird, being a squat, repulsive shape in a slate-colored skin and with a gaping, hissing mouth. When he became a fledgling, his appearance was little improved by the sparse gray down, and not until the end of the sixth month were the pin-feathers visible.

The young condor made no attempt to fly in the first two years of his life, and throughout that period the mother bird foraged diligently to sustain him. His hunger was insatiable, and so fiercely did he wield beak and talons that she dropped his food from a safe height, not venturing to alight near him until he had gorged.

Then broke the clear, still morning when the untried flier, now full-feathered, suddenly yielded to the aerial call within him. To gain impetus for the launching, he waddled hurriedly from end to end of a narrow ledge below the nest, cast himself into the abyss, and spread his broad wings.

Confidently, without effort, the novice sailed outward and upward in a wide, graceful spiral. Not a beat of his pinions was apparent, but steadily, swiftly, he gained altitude until human eyes would have seen him only as a black speck fading away in the blue sky.

With the Pacific's ribbon of surf fully twenty-five thousand feet below him, the newly anointed prince of the air abruptly ceased soaring. Folding his wings, eagle fashion, he fell like a plummet.

When within a scant hundred feet of the sandy beach, he suddenly spread wing tips and tail-feathers, banking the roaring air under him, and alighted with the touch of a powder-puff. A northern vulture, or turkey-buzzard, would have taken an hour of deliberate circling for that headlong five-mile descent.

On the ocean's marge the newcomer found a score of his fellow scavengers, waiting and watching at a discreet distance the inert form of a manatee, or sea-cow. The queer marine beast had been tossed there, weak and spent, at high tide in the preceding night, but it was not quite dead.

The young condor, ravenous and with no sobering experience to guide him, flew to the stranded animal and pecked at one of its eyes. The sea-cow was too near death to do more than shake its head, yet that faint effort of the huge brute was enough to tumble its feathered assailant upon the sand.

This unexpected rebuff angered the bird, without disheartening him; and doubtless because of that first unaided essay at a still living quarry, the formative trend of his impulses was turned toward prey instead of carrion. Here was food—but it had to be conquered.

He again flew at that disturbing head. This time there was only a slight trembling of the vast mass, and no resistance. The young condor, with savage strokes of his sharp beak, reached the brain-pan.

The adult vultures now performed their ritual for the dead, preparatory to the banquet. First, they noisily made a shuffling, hurried circuit of the carcass, following one another closely as if in pursuit. Then they abruptly paused and became statue-like, with gaze purposely fixed anywhere but on the sea-cow. Their silence also was studied.

Presently their leader croaked the signal to proceed, and all began again to parade

in an ever-narrowing circle. As they gradually approached the manatee, their ugly heads nodded and their awkward bodies swayed still more hypnotically. Soon the younger bird quitted his fleshy perch

to fall into step among them as if he were the veteran of a thousand feasts.

When they finally fed, he maintained his claim to a foremost place with beak and wings and a raucous, combative clamor.

II

For a decade thereafter the new king of the condors roosted nightly at the apex of Mount

One silver dawn, his wings spread now

measuring all of fifteen feet, and he the largest of existing flying birds, the master condor towered to a great height above his mountain home and headed into the north. He went away with the certitude of a fox-hound on a fresh scent.

All day he flew without pausing to feed, his course charted by the white pylons of the Andes Mountains. That night he roosted in northern Colombia, on a dead tree just below the snow-line.

The next morning he diverged sharply to the west, along the Isthmus of Panama, and then proceeded to the northwest, alighting only once that second day to strike down an incautious peccary in the Costa Rican foot-hills. But even then he fed sparingly on the wild pig, as if nursing his great hunger for a banquet to come.

Day after day, and now perceptibly verging inland from salt water, the condor continued his flight. The snow-capped Andes long had been succeeded by the lesser Sierras when he finally slackened speed.

Here below him was a land less picturesque than Colombia. The valleys had not so luxuriant a verdure, and the plains were sand and cactus instead of silt and pampas.

This country, new to the giant bird, was Old Mexico; and a ruthless rebellion was harrying its unhappy inhabitants. And then, if he had been analytical instead of instinctive, the condor would have recognized the age-old purpose of his long journey from Mount Coquimba.

Since the ensanguined history of man began, carrion birds have flown uncounted miles to remote battle-fields, led on by an intelligence deeper than the climate wisdom of migratory fliers. It is a faculty difficult for human observers to understand.

Presuppose a land free of strife, where there is not a vulture within a radius of many leagues. There comes a question of religious difference, a quarrel of caste, a disputed international boundary, or a violation of a state's rights—and almost with the echo of the first deadly shot a black dot appears in the clear firmament.

The evil bird approaches slowly, but as surely as the slaying that called it; and soon hosts of winged scavengers are overhead, engined and eager for their dreadful but necessary task.

Laymen and scientists alike are puzzled

THE BIRD-MAN
TURNED AND RAN
ACROSS THE DUSTY
CAMP GROUND

Coquimba and every day quartered the coast valleys leading down to the Pacific. He grew much larger and stronger than his fellows, primarily because of his unusual preference for freshly killed meat.

Enormous of appetite, he became a scourge to the yearling colts, young calves, goats, and sheep of the Colombian lowlands. The aggrieved Indians set many cunning traps for him. They captured those of his subjects that could not resist a carrion bait, but never gained a feather of the wary king.

as to which sense, sight or smell, invites the carrion feeder. The unlettered Colombian Indians have a theory as plausible as any advanced by civilized investigators:

"The dying and the dead wear a bright blanket that only the vulture can see."

The king of the condors found in the land of ancient Mexitl a fruitful theater for his activities. Mexican was armed against Mexican, and there is no other conflict of mankind so bitter as that of civil war.

Each rival camp called itself the liberator of the poor, and each sought to dismay the other with the horrors of carnage, rapine, and the torch. And, as the red terror spread over the wide country, the Andean condor came into his own.

It mattered not to him whether a sorely wounded man was clothed in the uniform of Carranza or the brigand costume of Villa. One and all, patrician officer or peon rifleman, he welcomed them to his grisly board. If they tried to fend him off, he remembered that helpless South Pacific manatee of his first flight—and a murderous beak swiftly completed the wicked work of the bullet.

Soon the startling rumor ran from guerrilla forces to organized pursuers that a pitiless sentry swung to and fro far overhead in the blue expanse, watching



HE HAD NOT GONE MORE THAN FIFTY YARDS BEFORE WORD WAS GIVEN
FOR THE RIFLES TO SPEAK

and waiting for the lone *hombre* who staggered in his stride or lay writhing on the ground.

Veterans disciplined to approach the cannon's mouth, and youthful recruits who scorned death because they were unfamiliar with it, shuddered while scanning the turquoise sky for that ominous black speck. Shrapnel and rifle-ball were established as part of the military tradition, but the bird of prey was an unnatural aftermath.

III

TWENTY miles eastward from the temporary headquarters of the Villa forces, beyond a mountain range and across the Arizona border, stands an American city of ten thousand inhabitants. It is a latter-day growth of brick and stone, with trolleys and telephones and electric lights. Except for the repellent cacti, the superabundant sunlight, and the presence of numerous gaudily dressed Mexican serving-people, the place might seem a thriving county seat "back East."

An army post is located near by, artillery, cavalry, and infantry, and the khaki-clad United States warriors, one and all, nourish an intense and abiding scorn for the small, brown followers of Venustiano Carranza and Francisco Villa in the neighboring republic. When the subject is Mexican soldierliness, the barracks criticism is that the Carranzistas are holding dress parades in their fortified southern cities in the hope of intimidating tatterdemalion Villistas loitering in impenetrable northern chaparral fastnesses. Neither side, in the dough-boy opinion, has the faintest intention of waging real warfare with the arms and munitions at their disposal.

The scornful American troopers did not suspect that an inventive scheme of scientific ruthlessness was being perfected twenty miles away to the westward, behind the cloak of the mountains, and that it involved the thriving city's unprepared inhabitants as prospective victims.

There was an aviator in the Villa camp, a tall, blond, bearded man whose lingual accomplishments included the Spanish of a *hidalgo*. His airplane was a bombing machine of the latest type.

The American border newspapers had announced his recent departure across the international line, ostensibly southwestward toward a Carranza stronghold, after having given some exhibition flights in Ari-

zona. It was erroneously stated that his nationality was Scandinavian, and that he had enlisted in the Mexican government's cause as an aerial mercenary against the roving bandits.

The aviator's mechanic was young and squat of build, and his coppery skin marked him as more Aztec than mestizo. His black, staring eyes were unafraid, even of the high-handed rebel commander.

The bird-man used the ceremonial speech of Spain in conversing with his helper. The latter, when absorbed in his work, muttered phrases that were current in the language of cultured Mexitl when Spaniards still were unlettered barbarians.

There was, in truth, more curiosity in the Villa ranks concerning this mysterious mechanic than about the aviator or his airplane. His presence in the camp was due to the *comandante's* cunning foresight, and the peon riflemen only knew that the newcomer had ridden up from the south.

It was suspected that the blond airman's reconnoitering flights over the distant Carranza garrisons were perfunctory. The bandit leader had already known their strength to a man, and was contemptuous of them all.

But the rumor of the aviator's real mission, which ran in whispers around the camp-fires, was too terrible for any but savages to believe. Surely the German had not fully understood, when he consented for a large money consideration to fly across the mountains from Arizona, what ultimately would be required of him!

The Villista commander chose a late afternoon for the dreadful enterprise which, if successful, would wreak in that nearest American city a wholesale horror that could not do otherwise than bring from the United States government an immediate armed intervention in Mexico. Then should follow the undoing of Carranza, and in the resultant chaos some iron-handed dictator could become his successor—perhaps a prominent "patriot" of the other faction. *Quien sabe?*

With this inspiration the bandit leader had encouraged his paid aviator to make altitude rather than distance flights and cunningly insisted that he should always take aloft as passenger the squat mechanic. The dark-eyed youth had begun to know the air currents above the mountains "better than his own teeth," as the peons say of any feat in which they are skilled.



HE WAS BLINDED AND HALF STUNNED. HIS HANDS WERE WRENCHED FROM THE CONTROLS.
HE GROPED FOR HIS PISTOL AND DISCHARGED IT WILDLY IN THE
DIRECTION OF HIS WINGED NEMESIS

So, when the *comandante* revealed his deadly scheme to the German mercenary it was done confidently, casually, as if he scouted the possibility of disobedience to the command.

The aviator's pink face turned gray.

"*Nein, Gott—nein!*" he gasped. "I cannot do that for pay. It would have been right in the war-time, for the sake of the Fatherland, but not now. This is wholesale murder you ask!"

The rebel leader wasted few words.

"Then, run," he said quietly, "It is the *ley fuga!*"

The tall, blond man seemed to crumple and shrink. He well knew the merciless "law of the fugitive."

"I—I will obey!" he stammered, the thought of subterfuge coming too late.

Only an instant acceptance of the dreadful commission could have deceived the wily Mexican into giving the aviator an opportunity to fly away alone in his machine—never to venture again into Estados Unidos de Mexico.

The officer shook his head in a wearied manner, but with finality, and called attention to the airplane with a negligent motion of the hand. The mechanic was officiously tuning up the engine—that swart, servile fellow who ostensibly had been hired only to keep bearings tight and cylinders free of carbon.

"*Comandante,*" the German began beseechingly, "give me a fair start before—before the sharpshooters take aim! If I escape, I'll say across the border that I wrecked my plane. I am still young—"

"It is a pact!" the Mexican interrupted suavely. "Go!"

The bird-man turned and ran in a zig-zag course across the dusty camp ground toward the refuge of the chaparral. He had not gone more than fifty yards before word was given for the rifles to speak. In another fifty they dropped him.

IV

MEANWHILE, the copper-skinned youth, no longer a mere mechanic, loaded on the airplane the cargo it was built to carry. The revolutionists, from expensively clad leader to half-naked camp-followers, had withdrawn to a safe distance.

The biplane's freight appeared innocent enough—a half-dozen pear-shaped objects, each not much larger than a man's head, slung underneath the fuselage. The new

aviator calmly appraised the cloudless sky and the smoke from the cooks' fires, which lingered in the still air like the ghosts of trees. Then he confidently set the machine in motion for an ascent as perfect as any ever achieved by the Teuton expert.

But not until the airplane was a mile away and a thousand feet up did the Villa soldiers cheer. Their applause was faltering, not as if they half hoped and half feared the fulfilment of a terrible errand, but because they wished to give themselves utterly to the black thought of death. They whispered bloodthirsty prophecies to one another, with ghastly boasts that all would come true before the fading day fully revealed the stars.

When the biplane had dwindled to a silver dot in the steely sky, the Villistas broke camp and hurried away into the broken country of the interior. It would be safer there when the gringos came swarming over the border for vengeance.

Machine guns and high-powered rifles are not in themselves terrifying to experienced bandits, but when they are backed by grimly determined U. S. A. regulars it were better for a *señor caballero* to say "*Adios!*" and to *vamose muy pronto*. There is a disquieting belief along the Mexican northern border that if Americano sharpshooters fail to get their men at a mile on the first shot, they examine the rifle-sights to see what is wrong.

Less than an hour's twilight remained for the novice flier to surmount the range before him, to maintain a lofty altitude until directly over the defenseless American city, to cast off his awful freight, to retreat in the direction of a Carranza garrison for the purpose of misleading the avengers, and then to circle back to the new rendezvous of the revolutionists, a round trip of at least a hundred miles.

Steadily, assuredly, he gained height. The mountain was all of five thousand feet, and he demanded of his biplane a margin of a thousand more to clear the windy surf of that barrier.

When the range had been conquered, ten miles straight ahead in the soft evening glow was the Arizona city. It twinkled electrically at that distance like a diamond necklace.

The volunteer aviator cautiously fingered the levers that would release his death-dealing freight. The Carranzistas of the south called him a common deserter. They

should learn that he was nemesis to all their pomp and power.

V

FROM a golden cloud fragment above the speeding airplane a black bolt fell out of the sky. It abruptly paused, with a shrill whistling of banked pinions and tail-feathers, a few hundred feet over the unseeing aviator, whose ears were filled with the thunder of his engine's exhaust.

For several miles the king of the condors had kept pace overhead with the heavily laden biplane. He was in a vindictive mood. His talons opened widely, to close like the springing of steel traps.

The condor jealously observed every detail of the strange flier. Its body was no larger than the stranded sea-cow of his first flight to the Pacific shore, but there was an unnatural threat in its roaring that kept the bird from an immediate attack.

Then, his anger increasing, the pursuer flew quite close. The whirling air currents from the propeller buffeted him, but he outfought this man-made tempest with his broad pinions that had tamed the hurricanes of heaven.

When within two miles of the city, the bird-man shut off his motor to test the sailing quality of his plane. He realized that, once within the city limits, he would have to glide noiselessly to the business district if he wished to drop his bombs before an investigating American army plane frustrated his design.

Here the Andean condor dropped—and struck.

Beak and pinions slashed and beat the man's face. His protecting goggles were torn off; he was blinded and half stunned. His hands were wrenched from the controls. He groped for his pistol and discharged it wildly in the direction of his winged nemesis. Screaming in baffled rage, the condor soared with mighty strokes of his great wings to a cautious distance, watching and waiting for another chance to renew his attack.

Partially recovering, the wounded aviator strove desperately to keep the machine on an even keel. He rolled giddily for a moment, then managed to start his engine. Too late! The biplane dipped, and sud-

denly dived in an uncontrolled tail-spin toward the earth.

The swart, squat youth struggled for balance to the very last. He possessed the stoical courage of his ancestors in the crimson days of Mexitl, the war-god, but he did not possess the flying skill of the German he had displaced.

The explosion rocked the buildings of the Arizona city and reverberated from the mountain range like the angry mutterings of an earthquake. Across the border the Villistas shouted joyfully when they heard the distant rumble, and hastened in their flight.

A vast, thunderous fountain, sulfurous and scorching, caught the condor, hovering far above, and tossed him like thistle-down on a gale. He could have faced a tornado chill with hail, or a sirocco laden with burning sand, but not this acrid blast of trinitrotoluol.

He did not regain his poise until the air cleared of its fumes. Beneath him were scattered bits of metal, pieces of smoking wood, and fragments of scorched flesh in a wide area about a deep, ragged hole in a meadow. Here was the work of man, who in his destructive mood rivals the wildest rage of the elements.

Back along the mountains the great bird flew, winging due south and as rapidly as a migrating wild duck. He saw on the deserted Villista camp-ground a freshly killed two-legged thing—the body of the German aviator.

But the king of the condors was homeward bound to his peaceful valley haunts about Mount Coquimba. His hunger could wait until the morrow's sun revealed an incautious fawn or a careless wild pig. He would utilize each remaining minute of the dusk to put twice as many miles between him and the stifling shock of that wild uproar from the meadow-land which followed his attack on man.

Ignoble in every intent, and equipped from curved beak to fanlike tail for only a shameful vocation, the Andean condor could not know his almost miraculous mercy to an unprotected city when he folded his huge wings and fell like a plummet out of that golden cloud fragment toward the deadly biplane.

EDITORIAL NOTE—"The Fliers" is a peculiarly prophetic story. Just as we are making up this number of *MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE*, the newspapers of December 18 report that Lieutenant Poulet, a well-known French aviator, made a forced landing at Moulmein, in Burma, after a battle with a huge vulture, which disabled his machine.

The Wild Fawn*

A WIFE WHO BROUGHT GAY PARIS TO QUIET DIXIE LAND

By Mary Imlay Taylor

Author of "Who Pays?" "Children of Passion," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. L. LAMBDIN

XXIII

VIRGINIA hung up the telephone receiver with an expression of keen relief. She had just heard of Leigh's acquittal.

"Dan got him off," the colonel told her jubilantly. "I knew he would! Say, Jinny, I sha'n't be home for lunch; going over to the club with Payson and Jessup."

Virginia smiled to herself. She knew how the old man would enjoy it, and she did not care for any luncheon herself. She told Plato so, half an hour later. The old man retired, grumbling.

"'Deed, Miss Jinny, yo' be sick. I'm gwine to tell de col'nell!" But she only laughed at him. She was, in fact, too nervous to eat. It seemed as if food would choke her.

She knew everything that had taken place in that court-house almost as well as if she had been there. The colonel had been very vivid in his talk, and she had spoken once over the phone with Mrs. Carter and once with Emily. On all these occasions she had heard the amazing fact that Fanchon's story on the stand had been a surprise to her husband. In other words, poor William had been deceived, Mrs. Carter declared, by a designing little minx, and his life ruined! This cry of maternal anguish went to the listener's heart, for Virginia had known William from childhood, and she understood, even more keenly than his mother, the humiliation he had suffered in court.

She moved restlessly about the house, trying not to think of it. She had gathered

flowers in the morning, and could not make the garden another means of diverting her mind, so she tried to answer some long-neglected letters.

This failed her, too, after a while, and she went into the old drawing-room, which at this hour was carefully shaded from the sun. Opening a shutter, she let in a flood of golden light. It shot across the room like the fiery lance of a crusader, its radiant tip striking on the ivory keys of her old piano. Virginia walked in it, watching the light catch on the white folds of her skirt. She sat down dreamily at the piano and began to play. She played without her notes, and unconsciously her fingers strayed into old, half-forgotten tunes.

She began to be quite happy. She had not played these tunes for years, and they brought back pictures, fragmentary bits of things, and voices and laughter. She had played that one for a dance when her grandfather had given her a birthday party at seventeen, and this one for old Judge Jessup because his wife used to like it. This was the one that William liked. She played it affectionately and lingeringly. She liked it herself, for it was old-fashioned and sweet and mellow, without being great music. She smiled a little over it. She knew that Judge Jessup, who appreciated good music, would call it "a finger-and-thumb exercise."

She was still playing it when it seemed to her that her bit of sunshine had grown dim, or was being obscured by some shadow, and she looked up. William Carter was standing beside her. The wide front doors were open in the warm summer

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SLOWLY, DELIBERATELY, AS IF SHE PERFORMED A RITE, SHE DREW OFF THE WEDDING-RING FROM HER FINGER, AND THEN, WITH A GESTURE MORE ELOQUENT THAN WORDS, SHE FLUNG IT INTO THE POOL

day. He had entered unheralded, and he was standing there quietly, looking down at Virginia, mute as a graven image, and nearly as pale.

She was taken unawares, terribly unawares, and her slender fingers made a little discord before they fell from the keys. She turned a startled face toward him, paling and then flushing, her lips tremulous.

"William!" she exclaimed softly, almost below her breath. "Oh, William, how you startled me!"

"I've no right to be here," he exclaimed bitterly. "I've felt that ever since I crossed the threshold and saw you sitting here—as you used to sit here with me, Virginia."

Her lips were still trembling, but she was recovering from the surprise. She rose from the piano and went to a more distant chair, which stood a little in the shadow. She did not want him to see her face too plainly.

"Sit down, William," she said pleasantly, suppressing the quiver in her voice. "I've just heard the news over the phone. I'm so happy about Leigh!"

He did not sit down. He began, instead, to march up and down the room, his hands behind him and his head bowed gloomily.

"I'm glad about Leigh, too," he replied grimly. "He's my brother—and I ought to have been in his place! I'm glad, but—"

He broke off, and continued his pacing. Virginia was startled again, this time painfully. Her heart sank; she began to dread what he might say next. She saw that he was almost beside himself. Old memories rushed back, too—old, touching, tender, and intimate things. This was the man she had once promised to marry, the man who had professed to love her so much. It seemed to her that she had a moment of clairvoyance. She knew the thoughts that must be thronging into his mind, too. She was human, she was aware that he had repented, that he had had bitter cause to repent; but she tried not to think of that.

At last he stopped short and stood looking at her, his face as deeply flushed as it had been pale. She made an effort to speak, but it seemed impossible, and she averted her eyes. It was true, she knew now that it was true—Fanchon had deceived him. The miserable tragedy that had crossed her own life, as well as his, was laid bare before her. She could not look at him; she felt a tightening in her throat.

"Listen"—he was still standing in front

of her, a grim figure of anger and despair—"I want to tell you the truth. I must tell you, Virginia—"

She stopped him with an involuntary gesture of protest.

"Oh, William, how can you?" she cried softly, reproachfully.

She had lifted her clear eyes to his, unshadowed and beautiful. He flinched from the look, and suddenly he was dumb. He turned with a poignant gesture of pain, averting his face.

Virginia rose from her chair and walked to the window. She was no longer flushed; she was very pale. Her breath was coming short, but her eyes were clear and luminous as she looked out on the old familiar garden, with its box-bordered flower-beds and the wicker table under the old horse-chestnut. She could almost see the tall, white head of her grandfather.

She thought, at the moment, that she saw more than that. There was also a vision of her father—a good man, too—and her mother. They had been noble-minded—as noble-minded as her grandfather was to-day. In his simple, kindly, old-fashioned way, Colonel Denbigh was a gentleman, and Virginia knew it.

She clung to the window-sill, her hands trembling. She had a woman's heart, she was very human—William had come back! How some women would have triumphed in a rival's misfortune!

Then she heard his voice.

"I've done wrong—everything has been tragic and terrible. It's almost too much to ask, but—Virginia, can you forgive me?"

For a moment Virginia could not speak. She did not even look at him. She was looking far across the lawn toward the white road that led to the town; but she saw nothing. Her eyes misted. The break in his voice touched her; it hurt her to hear it. She pitied him, yet there was a change in her. She had not known it until this moment, but now she knew it. It was as if she had seen through a glass, darkly, and now the veil was withdrawn, and she looked into a clear mirror and beheld her own image as it really was. Nothing could ever be the same again, nothing could be as it had been before, for her eyes were open.

"Did you hear me, Virginia?" he said hoarsely. "Will you forgive me?"

She lifted her eyes reluctantly to his again, turning from white to red, but her lips no longer trembled.

"I forgive you, William," she replied gently, and she held out her hand.

He took it and held it a moment while he searched her eyes. Then he turned and made his way blindly out of the room and out of the house.

He walked heavily down the driveway to the old gates. An impulse had brought him—an impulse that he had been too broken to resist. Now, in its reaction, he despised his own weakness. What right had he to worry Virginia? But his mind was still in conflict; he could no longer think concisely or even clearly. Like a man in a dream he walked out of the gates and turned into the road toward town.

The look in Virginia's eyes, the look that had roused him, came back to him only dimly. It was obscured by the scene that haunted him—the scene in the court-room. He could see the crowd of staring faces again, the judge on the bench, judicial and disinterested, the flushed, scowling countenance of the prosecuting attorney, the jury—and Daniel! How coolly his brother had stood in that heated, tense atmosphere! How his eyes had kindled and his voice pleaded for the boy's life! For jail would have been a living death to one so young.

Leigh rose before him, too. He could see the boy's beautiful face and his girlish eyes, and the change in him, the terrible change. The look of a man—a man who has killed—was in those young eyes!

William drew his breath hard. Her work, he thought bitterly! And yet how she haunted him! He could see more plainly than anything else her small, white face with its pointed chin and its fawnlike eyes. He could hear her voice, sweet and hurrying and light, with the spell of sex in it—how it haunted him, too! But he was done with her. He set his teeth hard and clenched his hand, walking on.

He walked blindly. A taxi passed, but he was unaware of it. He never looked up, he looked down into the dust of the road, for his heart was heavy and bitter. He was done with her!

Fanchon, who had hidden in the corner of the taxi that he might not see her, leaned forward now and looked out. She was on her way to the refuge she had found in the country—a poor, desolate place, but all that she could pay for—more than she could pay for, if the truth be told. She felt ill and weak, and she must go somewhere—anywhere, away from the Carters.

There was fever in her blood and her lips were dry, but her brilliant, restless eyes looked out after the figure in the road.

She had seen him come out of the Den-high gates!

She had thought of this, she had pictured it. If he got a divorce, he would marry Virginia—she never doubted that Virginia would take him. And now, now when it seemed to her that it was already on its way to accomplishment, she sank back into her corner aghast.

She lifted a shaking hand and pushed back the soft hair from her forehead. It was a helpless, thoughtless gesture, but she had pulled off her gloves, and the light caught the rings on her fingers. Suddenly she saw her wedding-ring—William's ring. She held out her small hand and stared at it, choking back the sob in her throat. She remembered the look in his eyes when he had put that ring on her finger. How he had loved her then!

A passion of tears and rage swept over her, and she cowered back in the taxi, weeping and beating the air with her small hands clenched. They had taken him away from her, they had made him hate her, and this girl—this girl with the superior look and the calm, sweet face—she would have him! That was the bitterest drop in Fanchon's cup of gall. It was that which set her to shaking and choking with rage and grief. William had passed her, he had not even looked at her. He had been to see Virginia!

Fanchon stared at the ring on her finger. It seemed to fascinate her.

Then she became aware of the laboring sound of the taxi. They were traveling along a rough road. Here it was ascending, and the motor-engine puffed and bellowed and wheezed like a whale in a trough of the sea. She leaned forward and looked out again. The road led through a wood. She could discern the slender stems of young trees in ever-increasing ranks. Ahead of them a stream ran down to a bridge.

The sight of the water dashing over the stones brought a new purpose to mind. She called to the chauffeur.

"Stop! I want to get out here."

He slowed down and stopped the machine, looking surprised. Fanchon opened the door and sprang lightly to the ground.

"Wait," she said quickly, authoritatively. "I'll be back in a minute."

The man stared, but he waited obedi-

ently. He had an idea that the lady was a little eccentric; but she was a beauty, and she was famous. He had been delighted to drive off with her in his cab. He leaned out now and watched her surreptitiously; but she had turned into the brush, and he lost sight of her small figure. She was so small that she was easily lost in the low growth of sumac.

Fanchon knew that he was watching her. She checked an impulse to go straight down to the brook in plain sight of the road. She turned, instead, and followed a path that led her to a still pool. The water was clear, and she could see the pebbles in the sandy bottom. It was scarcely a foot deep, but the place was hidden, and it would serve her purpose well.

She stepped out on a stone at the edge of the pool, and stood a moment staring down into it, panting a little, her lips moving. Her small, black-clad figure, her white face, and her wild, beautiful eyes had a startling effect. There was something sylvan about her, and the sylvan landscape framed her well; but she had, too, the look of a sorceress weaving a spell.

Slowly, deliberately, as if she performed a rite, she drew off the wedding-ring from her finger, held it aloft a moment, and then, with a gesture more eloquent than words, she flung it into the pool.

"*C'est fini!*" she cried, choking and sobbing.

It sank to the bottom, but it was not hidden. It lay there sidewise, glittering. A fugitive ray of sunlight, striking the surface of the still water, found it and made merry with it. It sent a glint out of the gold like a flash of laughter in a dark place; it danced upon it and rippled over it—and then a tadpole disturbed the pool.

Fanchon, still shaking, still filled with jealousy and misery, stared at the ring. It seemed to her that it mocked her, that it called her an outcast, that it laughed her to scorn. Her wedding-ring, the tangible sign of the link that bound her to William—how it flashed and glittered! Not even water hid it.

Her lips twitched painfully, not with mirth but with anguish, and she covered her eyes with her hands. Shutting the sight of it out thus, she stumbled back to the path.

She had scarcely tasted food that day, and she felt suddenly faint and dizzy; but she set her small white teeth on her lip, and

her great eyes smoldered dangerously. She was wildly angry again now. She ran along the path and had almost reached the end of it when she wavered, then stopped short and stared at her hands.

That third finger felt unnatural. It seemed to grin at her—white and bare as a bone. She felt for her gloves, and could not find them. She leaned against a tree and clasped her finger with her small, bare hand. In her agony of mind she clutched and tore at the bark until the blood came. The cut in the flesh roused her; she drew a deep breath and looked back.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she murmured softly, and then: "*Non, non, I cannot—I cannot!*"

So she went back slowly, reluctantly, as if she was drawn against her will. She went all the way to the edge of the pool and looked into it. Yes, it was still there—her ring! How strangely it gleamed at her! So might the eye of the serpent have gleamed in triumph at Eve in the Garden of Eden.

She couldn't resist it. She stooped and picked up a stick. Creeping out on the stone again, she tried to fish up her ring with the stick; but it went deeper; it seemed to wink at her and dodge her, burrowing into the sand. With a cry of anguish, Fanchon dropped to her knees, half in the water, and plunged her arm into the pool, digging into the soft sand with her fingers. Joy and relief shot through her heart when she felt the hard metal loop again. She had it!

She staggered to her feet, holding it tight, but she wouldn't put it back on her finger. She knotted it into her wet handkerchief and thrust it into her bosom. Then, blindly, weeping and shaken and dripping, she made her way back to the waiting taxi.

XXIV

COLONEL DENBIGH was pleasantly detained at the club luncheon. He went home in a taxi late in the afternoon, only about half an hour before his own dinner-time. Plato met him in the hall.

"Miss Jinny ain't eaten no lunch, no suh, an' now she's up in her room. She say she's got headache, an' not to wait dinner."

The colonel deposited his broad-brimmed hat on the table.

"Anybody been here to see me to-day, Plato?"

The old negro shook his head.

"No, suh. Mist' Wilyum Carter, he

come in to see Miss Jinny, but he's gone 'bout two hours ago."

A strange expression flitted across the colonel's face, but he did not show it to his faithful factotum.

"Serve dinner on time, Plato," he said gravely. "I don't expect company—lunched in town with Judge Jessup and Mr. Payson."

"Yessuh, so Miss Jinny tole me. Great trial, suh! Mirandy, Miz Carter's collud girl, she phoned me 'bout it. She say she got so excited she went out in de yard an' killed the wrong hen fo' dinner. She killed de bes' layer dey got, an' Mist' Carter he 'mos' throw a fit. She say he's gwine to make Mist' Wilyum Carter git a divorcement—"

"Plato," bellowed the colonel, "how often have I got to tell you to stop gossiping? You quit it and get my dinner ready, or I'll kill you instead of Mrs. Carter's hen! Hear me?"

Plato giggled disgracefully, but he retired toward the dining-room door.

"Colonel Colfax, he used to say—"

"Shut up!" shouted Colonel Denbigh, making for the stairs.

Plato withdrew slowly, still mumbling, and the colonel went up to Virginia's room. He hesitated an instant, and then he knocked at the door.

"Got a bad headache, Jinny?"

She answered without opening the door.

"Very bad, grandpa. Don't wait dinner—I don't want any."

"I'll phone for Dr. Barbour," he suggested anxiously. "How about it, Jinny?"

"No, no! It's just a little headache, from the sun. Any news, grandpa?"

The colonel, outside the closed door, stood with his hand at his chin, thinking.

"Not much, Jinny. I phoned everything I could, didn't I? Dan made a great figure at the trial, and Leigh's home now—I reckon Mrs. Carter's got him packed in cotton batting by this time. There's one thing—I saw myself—" He hesitated, listening, but there was no interrogation from the other side of the door. "I saw William Carter ignore his wife in open court—after the verdict. It—well, Jinny, it stuck in my throat."

There was a significant silence. He heard the slight stir of some one in the room; he thought that Virginia had been lying down and had suddenly sat up.

"I don't think it was just right," she

said at last, in a faint voice. "He was here this afternoon, and he told me—he says she's left him for good."

The colonel, outside the door, gritted his teeth a moment in silence, very red in the face.

"The lummox!" he muttered under his breath at last.

"What did you say, grandpa?"

"I didn't say anything, Jinny, I only thought something. I thought something not quite polite."

"Oh!"

Again he heard the faint stir of her movements on the other side of the door.

"The girl looked like death," he said bluntly. "She'd been through a terrible ordeal. It—I tell you what, Jinny, it looked darned cowardly!"

There was no reply to this, not even the rustle of Virginia's garments. The colonel waited, rubbing his chin. At last he thought it better to leave something to her imagination.

"Have a bottle of ginger ale, Jinny? It 'll do your head good."

She laughed hysterically. He could hear it. It was a musical laugh, but it was full of tears. His hand clenched.

"You get better!" he called to her. "I want you to drive up the mountain to-morrow and look at Colonel Russell's mare. He wants to sell her for a lady's saddle-horse. I reckon you'd like her, Jinny. It 'll take you about half the day. You can lunch with Mrs. Barbour. The doctor met me in town to-day, and he said his wife wanted you out to luncheon at the farm to-morrow."

There was a rustle this time.

"I think I'll go. Thank you, grandpa. You're an angel—I mean about the horse."

The old man cackled.

"Not in any other way, eh, Jinny?"

"You go to your dinner! You'll get no compliments here," she called back gaily.

But it was a tremulous gaiety. The old man knew it, and he suspected the headache. He went slowly and thoughtfully down-stairs. Dinner was already served in the quaint dining-room, Plato standing erect and black as ebony behind the colonel's chair. The old man glanced contentedly at the white damask and the old-fashioned service.

"What have you got for dinner, Plato?" he asked as he sat down.

Plato went over a modest menu.

"Got some deviled crabs, col'nel. Yes-suh, got 'em dis mornin' when yo' was in court—bigges' crabs I's seen dis season."

The colonel considered.

"Plato, you take a deviled crab up to Miss Jinny's room. If she doesn't eat it, I'll phone for Dr. Barbour."

Unconsciously, the colonel was applying Miranda's panacea for all human ills. Inwardly he was exceeding wroth with William Carter. His wrath and his fears continued well into the next morning, until he saw Virginia, pale but smiling, seated in the old wagonette, and Lucas driving sedately down the roadway to the gate. The colonel observed their departure with an anxious eye.

He was not sure now that Virginia cared. She was pale, but she was holding her own. The idea that William Carter had dared to come straight back—after that trial and all!

"The lummo!" the colonel growled under his breath. "The cowardly lummo—he knew I was out."

Meanwhile, Lucas was driving slowly along the turnpike down which Fanchon had galloped, followed by Corwin—on his way, as it turned out, to his death; for that ride had led straight to the climax in the upper room of the inn. As it transpired later on, both Virginia and Lucas were thinking of it as the colonel's slow old horses trotted along under the spreading branches of the great trees which stood like sentinels on either side of the wide road.

At this late season the foliage was dense and a little dusty, while here and there a sumac waved the first red flag of autumn, or a gum-tree stood like a flame in the midst of a grove of cedars. Virginia was watching a cardinal-bird winging its crimson flight from branch to branch when she heard Lucas accost a passing friend and then fall to chuckling—the succulent, suggestively happy chuckle of the negro. Lucas had never acquired the silent elegance of Mrs. Payson's coachman. He was an old family servant, and he had known Virginia from her childhood. He chuckled now, touching the off horse with the mildly provoking tip of his whip.

"See dat nigger, Miss Jinny? He works at Miz Quantah's place. He's gwine courtin', sho's yo're born!"

Virginia, who had lost sight of the red bird, glanced down the road after the retreating form of a middle-aged negro at-

tired in clean blue overalls and a big straw hat.

"How do you know he's going courting, Lucas? He's not very young, is he?"

"No, ma'am, Miss Jinny, he ain't, but his wife died a while ago. He's gwine courtin'—yes, miss, he sho' is. How'd I know? He done wash his face, Miss Jinny. When a man wash his face an' shave, he's gwine courtin'—yes, miss."

Virginia laughed, and Lucas, thus encouraged, proceeded. He touched the nigh horse this time.

"Yo' g'long, Tommy Becket. Yes, Miss Jinny, he's gwine courtin'—he works ober at Miz Quantah's, ayonnah"—Lucas pointed his whip—"righ' over dere in dem trees. Dat's where Miz Wilyum Carter am now, Miss Jinny."

Virginia blushed. Involuntarily her eyes followed the flourish of his whip. They had come to the foot-hills, and, in a clearing, she saw a bleak farmhouse, a mere shack it seemed to her. She remembered that the Quantah place was miserable, and the woman herself gaunt and poor—a forlorn, forbidding creature.

Then Lucas broke into his monologue again.

"Miz Carter, she's sick, Miss Jinny—took sick jest after de trial. I did heah she ain't got any money, an' Miz Quantah, she's gwine to turn her out, sick or no sick, she say."

Virginia sat up suddenly.

"What did you say, Lucas?"

Lucas turned half-way round, driving with one hand, and flourishing the other as he answered.

"I say Miz Wilyum Carter took sick, an' she ain't got any money." Lucas stopped the horses and pointed.

"I reckon she's sick in dat room ayonnah—see de blinds open? Ain't nebber open 'less Miz Quantah got a lodger. Ain't got noffin' to eat at Miz Quantah's 'cept corn dodgers an' rabbits—no, Miss Jinny, dey ain't."

"Lucas," said Virginia earnestly, "do you really mean that Mrs. William Carter is over there now, ill and without money?"

"Sho', Miss Jinny, she is. I got dat from Miz Quantah's collud man—yes, miss, I sho' did. She's sick an' she ain't got no money."

Virginia was silent. Her eyes fixed themselves on that distant house, that repulsive, sordid-looking house, and she thought of



VIRGINIA DESCENDED
FROM THE WAGONETTE.
"IS MRS. WILLIAM CAR-
TER HERE?" SHE ASKED
QUIETLY

MRS. QUANTAH EMPTIED
THE PAN AND LOOKED
AROUND HER. "YES, SHE IS—
SHE'S SICK, TOO"

Fanchon—a small, dainty, bewitching creature—dancing that amazing dance at the church musicale.

Lucas started the horses. The road turned, and before them a low bridge spanned an exquisite stream. The water purled and dashed over stones, and slipped, still clamoring, into a lovely pool where lily-pads floated and low willows dipped their swinging boughs.

"Lucas, stop!" cried Virginia.

Lucas pulled the horses up so suddenly that one old fellow looked back over his shoulder.

"Yes, Miss Jinny?"

"Drive back to Quantah's place, Lucas."

The fat old horses turned obediently. Lucas said nothing. For once he restrained that racial quality which makes the faithful colored servant the intimate adviser and guardian of "his family." He had a very clear understanding of Miss Jinny's motives, he knew Miss Jinny. For all that, he felt that this time she could be trusted to go her own way—as long as he was in attendance, to exercise, at the crucial moment, his worldly wisdom.

The old wagonette, turning clumsily because of its length, was moving along the broken bit of road which led around the elbow of the wood into the Quantah clearing. The wood was an exquisite place, delicately fringed along its edges with yellow patches of goldenrod and the purplish white mist of asters. Through slender tree-stems Virginia began to see the house more plainly.

The side door stood open, and a tall, slatternly woman was feeding chickens, holding an old tin saucepan in the hollow of her arm. As the wagonette appeared she raised her eyes from the fowls long enough to stare, but went on throwing scraps out by the fistful, her hard mouth drawn into forbidding lines.

Lucas drew rein and Virginia descended from the wagonette.

"Is Mrs. William Carter here?" she asked quietly.

Mrs. Quantah emptied the pan and looked around her.

"Yes, she is—she's sick, too."

Virginia's quick blush mounted. She felt peculiarly helpless. She was not even sure that Fanchon would see her, but she held out her card.

"Please ask her to see me—if she can," she said in a propitiating tone.

Mrs. Quantah wiped her fingers on her apron and took the card.

"Come in," she said harshly, holding open the door.

Virginia followed her in. Involuntarily she gathered her white dress about her, the place seemed so dingy and repulsive. They passed through a forlorn hall and entered the kitchen. Sitting in a chair in the middle of the old room, with his back to the stove, was Mr. Samuel Bernstein. Virginia stopped involuntarily, and the woman, pulling out another chair for her, left them abruptly, carrying Virginia's card in the empty sauce-pan.

Mr. Bernstein rose and bowed.

"Miss Denbigh, I think?" he said with elaborate politeness.

Virginia smiled.

"Mr. Bernstein, I know," she replied quietly.

He offered his chair.

"It's better than the one she's given you," he said graciously, "which ain't sayin' much. Sit down, Miss Denbigh. I guess you've come out here same as I have. I'm trying to see Mrs. Carter—Miss Fanchon lay Fare, I guess it is now. This party"—he waved his thumb over his shoulder—"Mrs. Quantah, she says Mrs. Carter's sick."

"So I hear." Virginia turned her eyes discreetly away. She could not look at Mr. Bernstein without thinking of his effort to engage her grandfather, and she wanted to laugh in spite of her errand. "I'm very sorry; I hope she'll see me."

"I hope so." Mr. Bernstein leaned forward confidentially. "Say, I'll tell you what I've done. You see, I felt kinder guilty. You know about that Carter boy? Well, I came out here on purpose to make good. I'm offering Miss Fanchon one thousand dollars a week for one big seven-reel feature for the Unlimited Film Company, and, after that, say, five hundred a week steady as ingenoo in the company."

Virginia lifted her eyes with difficulty to the kindly red face opposite.

"That seems munificent, Mr. Bernstein," she said softly, and then, in spite of herself, she giggled.

Mr. Bernstein beamed.

"It's a good offer, if I do say it! But, see here, Miss Denbigh, it ain't often we get a subject like that. She's just ideal for dances—see? Now there's another thing. Coming out here, I made a find!" Mr.

Bernstein raised one fat hand and spoke behind it, watching the door. "Notice that party—Mrs. Quantah?"

Virginia nodded, her eyes dancing. Mr. Bernstein edged his chair closer.

"Say! We're going to do some Dickens pictures. No copyright on Dickens, you know, an' it's easy to get 'em. We're going to do 'Nicholas Nickleby.' Now, I ask you, did you ever see a better *Miss Squeers*? Look at her—take her all around—them angles an' that mouth! Say, I'd give her something neat, believe me, I would. I said so to her, an' what d'you suppose she said to me? That woman, poor as Job's turkey—what d'you suppose she said?"

Virginia was unable to imagine it and said so—with some difficulty, her lips tremulous.

"I asked her." Mr. Bernstein leaned back in his chair and shook his head sadly. "I told her what I wanted an' what I'd pay, an' she said, 'Nothing doin'!' Now, what d'you know about that?"

He was about to say more, to enlarge on his grievance and on Mrs. Quantah's resemblance to *Miss Squeers*, but there was a sharp sound. A door opened and shut, and the ideal *Miss Squeers* entered. She did not look at Mr. Bernstein, but turned a stony gaze upon Virginia's flushed and smiling face.

"She'll see you," she said laconically.

Mr. Bernstein leaned farther back in his chair with the air of a martyr determined to await his turn, if it took all night. Virginia rose hastily and followed Mrs. Quantah.

A moment before she had had to laugh at Bernstein; now her heart sank. She felt that Fanchon had never liked her, and now—wasn't this an intrusion? Her courage suddenly wavered, and her knees felt weak under her when the gaunt woman opened a door at the end of the hall and almost thrust her into the room beyond.

XXV

THE room was small and dim, although the shutters were open, as Lucas had remarked. There was a frayed and scanty look to everything, but a big four-poster stood in the corner. Lying across that, looking as small and helpless as a child, was Fanchon. She was half dressed, and she lay with her head on her arm, her soft, dark hair tumbled about her shoulders and framing her white profile.

Virginia, who had stopped just inside the door, stood waiting, hesitating, uncertain what to do. Fanchon did not move, and she looked so white and limp as she lay there that Virginia thought she had fainted. She went quickly across the room and stood beside the bed, looking down at the motionless figure.

Fanchon's eyes were closed, and the long, thick lashes made shadows on her white cheeks. There was no sign of make-up now except a touch of the lips that made her mouth look scarlet, in fearful contrast to the whiteness of cheeks and brow and throat. One arm was thrown across the bed, and the small hand clasped the crumpled coverlet convulsively, the blue veins showing through its delicate whiteness. Half clad as she was, Virginia saw how thin were Fanchon's arms and how slender her neck, delicate and round as the stem of a flower. How changed she was!

A memory of the daring little figure in white flashed back, and a flood of pity submerged Virginia's heart. William's cry, "I'm done with her!"—how incredibly cruel it would have seemed here!

Still she did not move or speak, and Virginia touched her gently.

"Fanchon!" she said softly.

Very slowly Fanchon rose on her elbow and looked at the visitor. The fawnlike eyes were no longer soft; there was a smoldering fire in them, and the delicate brows came down above them. The white face was distorted with an emotion that seemed to shake her from head to foot.

"Why do you come here?" she asked sharply. "What do you want of me?"

Virginia's blush deepened painfully.

"I came because I heard you were ill and in trouble," she replied kindly, her voice trembling a little.

Fanchon drew herself up further into a sitting attitude, her knees under her chin and her hands clasping them. Her eyes still lowered at Virginia, and the whiteness of her face against her loose, dark hair had an almost weird effect.

"Why do you care for that?" she asked slowly. "Why do you want to see how far I'm down?"

Her tone and her glance alike conveyed almost an insult, and certainly a defiance; yet she was so weak that the other girl saw her tremble from head to foot, as if she had an ague. Again Virginia blushed, but this time she raised her head proudly.

"You don't know me," she replied gravely. "You wouldn't say that to me if you did. I'm—I'm not like that."

Fanchon still looked at her steadily, an untamed passion leaping up in her brown eyes like a flame.

"*Ma foi*, I know you well enough, I think!" she retorted bitterly. "You're the woman my husband loved—and you've taken him from me! Oh, I know—you can look indignant! You righteous people—oh, *mon Dieu*, how good you are! But you've taken him away, for all that."

Virginia, who had never had such things said to her before, recoiled. She drew away, looking at the wild little creature on the bed with a kind of horror. For a moment all her impulses were beaten down, and in the rebound she was ready to turn her back, to abandon the wretched girl to her fate. She felt as if physical blows had been rained upon her, as if she was no longer the Virginia Denbigh who had entered that wretched room on an errand of mercy.

"If you say things like that I can't stay to hear them," she said hurriedly, speaking with an effort, hot tears in her eyes. "I came to help you, if I could—and you insult me."

Fanchon laughed the shrill laughter of hysterics.

"You don't like it!" she cried wildly. "*Que voulez vous?* You want only nice things said to you—and I can have all the horrid things and all the insults. That's all I've had since I came here!"

Virginia, who was half-way to the door, stood still. Her quick ear had caught the wildness of the laughter, and the poor little huddled figure was sinking weakly forward. She came back.

"Fanchon, I came here to help you. I'm telling you the truth—can't you believe me? Indeed, I should like to help you, if I could."

Fanchon's face twisted convulsively, and she snatched at the coverlet and drew it up over her shoulders. To Virginia she looked like a wild child playing at "tents" under the counterpane.

"*Tiens!*" she cried fretfully. "I don't know what you mean. I've always told stories myself, until—until Leigh killed that man. Now, I'm not telling stories. I suppose I can believe that you meant to do something—something queer. That's what they've all done to me since I came. I

don't know why you're here—I don't care! *C'est fini*—I'm done with you all!"

Virginia started. She remembered William's words.

"I came because you're ill. I want to help you, to make you more comfortable. That's really all I came for, Fanchon. I'm very sorry you feel so bitterly toward us—toward me."

Fanchon shook back her hair and looked at the other girl curiously, her eyes darkening and changing wonderfully.

"How pretty she is," Virginia thought, "and how wretched."

But Fanchon did not speak. For a while she only studied Virginia. At last she spoke slowly, twisting the coverlet.

"Were you in court?" she asked.

Virginia shook her head. Fanchon's eyes held hers with that fierce, dark, challenging look.

"But you know my story?"

"Yes, I've heard it," Virginia reluctantly answered.

"My husband told you!" Fanchon sprang out of bed and ran across the room, seizing Virginia's arm and looking at her wildly. "William told you!"

Virginia, who was fatally honest sometimes, said nothing; but her face confessed that William had told her much. She was horrified. How could she make this furious little creature understand how William had told her, and how she had replied? She ought never to have come here.

For an instant panic seized her and she longed to get away; and then her inherited and noble fearlessness steadied her. She met Fanchon's feverish look calmly and frankly.

"I wish you'd believe me," she said simply. "I'm not that sort of a woman, Fanchon. It's true that William and I were engaged once, but he broke it off when he married you. And now"—Virginia's pride flashed in her eyes—"if he were free tomorrow, Fanchon, it would make no difference—no difference in the world to me."

They looked at each other. Fanchon, still holding the other girl's arm in her shaking hands, searched Virginia's face with that wild look of hers, her lips quivering. Virginia met the look at first proudly and angrily, and then with such compassion, such tenderness and honesty, that Fanchon's lips twisted convulsively again. Suddenly she dropped Virginia's arm and turned away. She took an unsteady step

and almost reeled as she flung herself into a chair, hiding her face in her hands.

"Do you believe me now, Fanchon?" Virginia asked more gently.

There was no answer for a moment, then she heard the other girl's convulsive weeping. Fanchon, who had never controlled an impulse in her life, was weeping wildly, twisting about in her chair and beating the air for breath. It startled Virginia; she forgot herself and went to her. Seizing the frantic little hands, she held them in her cool, firm ones, as a mother might hold a frantic child's.

"Hush!" she whispered. "You're ill, you mustn't! Don't cry like this."

But Fanchon wept on until she lay there almost fainting, white and limp and broken. Virginia began to suspect what had happened before she came into the room.

"*Dieu*, they all hated me!" Fanchon gasped at last. "All but Leigh and that silly child, Emily." She laughed wildly, still gasping. "She tried to paint her face like mine, and they made her wash it off. *Quelle drôle de chose que la vie!* And they hated me for that." She gasped again, dragging her hands away from Virginia and beating the air with them. "They made him hate me, too."

"Oh, no, no!" cried Virginia. "Fanchon, you're wild—you don't understand!"

"Oh, I understand!" she retorted bitterly. "You're one of them. I don't know why you came here—you're one of them!"

"I came because you're ill. You'll be very ill if you don't stop."

"You think I'll die, *n'est-ce-pas?*" Her red mouth twisted oddly. "They'd like me to die, so he'd be free. They're so good—they don't like divorces!"

"Hush!" said Virginia steadily. "I wouldn't stay here if you were not so ill. Fanchon, you're trembling and shaking. Let me get a doctor for you; let me take you out of this wretched place."

Fanchon laughed again hysterically.

"It's a fine place, isn't it? *Tiens!* The place for Mrs. William Carter. You see I have no money. *Mon Dieu*, I wouldn't take a cent of his—I'd starve first!"

"I understand." Virginia laid her hand gently on her shoulder. "I should feel like that myself. But I'm a woman, Fanchon—let me help you while you're so ill."

Something in her touch, her voice, reached the girl. She stopped shivering and looked up into Virginia's face. She

looked up steadily, her own face changing and quivering. Then, suddenly, she sank back in her chair very pale and quiet, her large eyes fixed not on Virginia now, but on space.

"He was the only good man who ever loved me," she said in a low voice. "I'm not bad—I've never been bad—but they thought I was, and I lied to him. I was afraid that if he knew I was divorced, he wouldn't care for me—not in that way—and it would have killed me then." Her voice broke pitifully. "I—I loved him."

Her head sank mournfully, she began to tear at the elaborate lace petticoat she wore.

"You mean William?" said Virginia gently.

She nodded. Then, with a convulsive effort, she went on, more to herself than to Virginia.

"He was good, and he loved me. He asked me to marry him, and I lied. I said I'd never been married before. I needn't have said it, but I was afraid. I lied. And he hates me." Her voice wavered again. "He hates me. I shall never see him again!"

"But you love him still, Fanchon," Virginia said softly; "and if you love him you'll forgive him."

Fanchon's face flamed suddenly.

"Never! I don't want to see him again." She rose unsteadily. "I'm going to dress and go out there." She pointed toward the door, laughing again and trembling at the same time. "That fat man is out there. I'm going into his pictures. He's not afraid to engage me for his show."

"You can't go, Fanchon," said Virginia quickly. "You're too ill. I must help you." She stopped, and her eyes filled with tears. "Fanchon, I'm so sorry for you, I hope you understand. Let me help you."

Fanchon turned, caught at a chair-back, and clung to it, laughing wildly.

"You're so sorry for me—and he loves you!"

"No," said Virginia, "he sha'n't! If he did, it would make no difference. Fanchon, I want you to leave this place and come with me. Let me take care of you. You're too ill to stand up."

"To stand up? Why, I'm going to dance for the pictures. You call me ill? I can dance. *Attendez!*"

She let go of the chair to which she had

been clinging, and seemed to listen, her head bent and her brown eyes brilliant, her whole small figure quivering and tense.

"*Mon Dieu*—I hear it—the music!"

She swayed slightly, and then softly,

a wretched, quivering, tear-stained face. She thought it would have touched a heart of stone.

At last she could endure it no longer; it seemed to her like the dance of death.

"Stop!" she cried. "Oh, Fanchon, stop!"

Virginia's voice, the sharp sound of her own name, broke the spell. Fanchon turned her head and looked at her. Some-

thing seemed to snap in her brain; her eyes clouded, she reeled, and, stretching out groping hands, she staggered blindly and would have fallen had not the other girl caught her. Virginia held her by main force, almost lifting her in her strong young arms, for suddenly all the life and motion had departed from Fanchon's small and pitifully wasted

NEVER IN HER LIFE
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easily, she began to dance. She danced wonderfully, keeping time to the music that she seemed to hear, swaying with its rhythm, stepping gracefully back and forth, weaving a dance so strange, so weird, so silent, that Virginia could not move. She stood rooted to the spot, watching, fascinated—watching the white face and the wild hair, the half-bare shoulders and the slender, lifted arms.

Fanchon clasped her hands behind her head, twisting her slender body this way and that. Her small bare feet flashed back and forth, soft and silent and incredibly swift. She danced across the room, back and forth, to and fro, and Virginia watched her. Never in her life had she seen such dancing; never in her life had she seen such

figure, and she lay white and senseless against Virginia Denbigh's breast.

Ten minutes later Virginia came out of Fanchon's room and closed the door behind her. She was very pale, but her eyes shone. She ignored the patient Bernstein and spoke directly to the woman.

"Mrs. Quantah, I'm going to take Mrs. Carter home with me. She's very ill. Have you a telephone?"

Mrs. Quantah stood rigidly.

"I ain't got no phone, an' she ain't a



goin' to take her trunk away until she pays. She owes me two weeks' board now, and extries."

"I was just telling the lady," Mr. Bernstein began, "I'd pay in advance if—"

"I'll pay," said Virginia superbly, sweeping past them, her head up. "Be so kind as to make out your bill in full, Mrs. Quantah."

She opened the hall door and called Lucas.

"Drive over for Dr. Barbour, Lucas. Bring him here at once, if you can. While you're over there, phone to Plato to get the west room ready for an invalid—yes, and phone to the colonel that I want him out here—in a taxi."

"Yes'm, Miss Jinny."

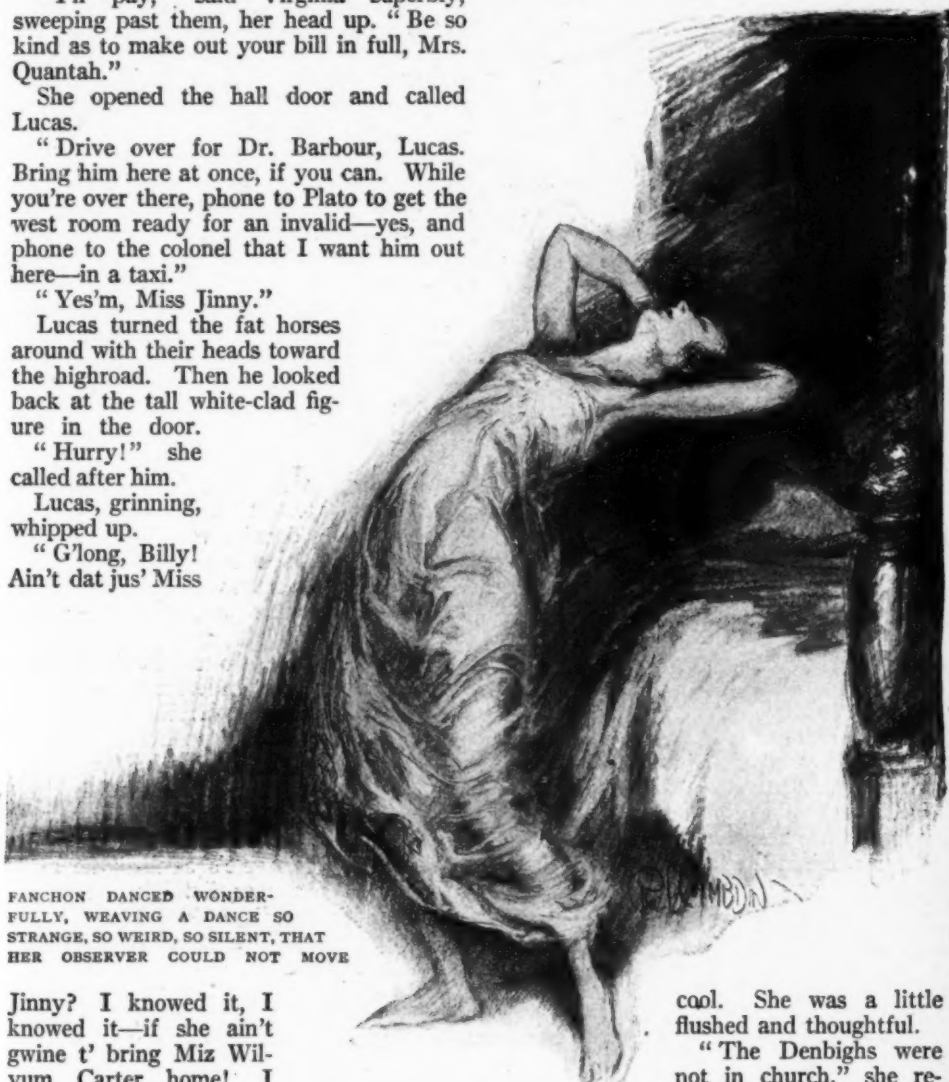
Lucas turned the fat horses around with their heads toward the highroad. Then he looked back at the tall white-clad figure in the door.

"Hurry!" she called after him.

Lucas, grinning, whipped up.

"G'long, Billy! Ain't dat jus' Miss

sleeves and his stocking feet when his wife and Emily returned from the morning service. Emily went up to her room at once, but Mrs. Carter came into the library, took off her hat, and sat down to get



FANCHON DANCED WONDERFULLY, WEAVING A DANCE SO STRANGE, SO WEIRD, SO SILENT, THAT HER OBSERVER COULD NOT MOVE

Jinny? I knowed it, I knowed it—if she ain't gwine t' bring Miz Wil-yum Carter home! I knowed it, I knowed it! Ain't dat Miss Jinny cl'ar down to de groun'? I declare, if it don' beat all!"

XXVI

SUNDAY morning fell on the first day of September, and it was very hot—so hot that Mr. Carter refused to go to church. He was sitting in his library in his shirt-

cool. She was a little flushed and thoughtful.

"The Denbighs were not in church," she remarked after a moment.

"I don't know that I ever knew Colonel Denbigh to miss a Sunday, except when his son died. Do you remember, Johnson?"

Mr. Carter nodded. He had stopped reading the Sunday paper and was slowly fanning himself with it.

"Sensible man to stay at home," he grunted.

"People stare so at us!" Mrs. Carter complained. "Emily and I felt like a circus. I'm so glad we've got Leigh off to college at last!"

Mr. Carter made no reply to this, but after an interval he muttered something about a young donkey. Mrs. Carter sighed.

"Where's William?" she asked in a whisper.

Mr. Carter, who had become nervous under continued misfortune, started violently.

"I don't know. Do you happen to think he's drowned himself?"

"Johnson!"

"I'm expecting anything," said Mr. Carter desperately. "There's only one sensible person in this family, and that's Dan."

"Dan's at the Denbighs—I don't know what for. He's been there twice since Friday, and he's worried. I can see it."

"Of course! He's in love with that girl now, I reckon, and she won't have a cripple."

"He isn't a cripple!" cried his mother warmly. "He's only lame; but it's not that; papa—I think it's something about—" She looked around, a little flushed, and added in a whisper, "about Fanchon."

Mr. Carter said something short and cryptic and relapsed into silence.

"I don't feel that it's right," his wife continued bravely. "It's worrying me, Johnson. William hasn't—well, he hasn't shown any feeling at all."

"He's going to get a divorce."

William's mother sighed.

"I hate divorces," she said at last. "We never had one in the family."

"That's because you're from South Carolina," retorted her husband unfeelingly. "Can't get one there, anyway."

Mrs. Carter disregarded this.

"I don't feel right about it. She—she saved Leigh."

The door-bell rang sharply. Mrs. Carter jumped.

"Oh, Johnson, put on your coat and your shoes," she cried. "Miranda's let some one in."

Mr. Carter began to jam his hot feet into his shoes, which seemed incredibly too small to receive them.

"Drat it!" he said.

He had not got to the coat when Miranda's amiable chocolate face appeared at the door.

"Col'nel Denbigh, Mist' Carter," she said, and withdrew.

The colonel, carrying his wide hat in his hand, came in. He looked very tall, very thin, and very grave.

"Oh, colonel, is there anything the matter?" Mrs. Carter cried, seeing his face.

"I came to see William," the colonel said. "Is he here?"

Mrs. Carter ran to the door.

"Miranda," she called after the girl, "go up and tell Mr. William to come down."

Meanwhile, Mr. Carter had offered a chair. He was a little startled and perplexed, but he looked keenly at the colonel.

"Do you want us to go, colonel?" he asked bluntly.

Colonel Denbigh lifted a protesting hand.

"No! I want you all to hear what I have to say, especially William."

There was an awkward pause. Then William came down-stairs, looking pale and haggard, and Colonel Denbigh rose. The old man was so tall that he seemed to tower.

"William," he said, "I came to see you. Virginia sent me. We wanted Dan to tell you, but Dan doesn't wish to interfere. Your wife is at my house—very ill."

William turned from white to red. For a moment he seemed nonplused, then he rallied.

"I have no wife, Colonel Denbigh," he said slowly. "Fanchon left me weeks ago. I expect to sue her for divorce."

Colonel Denbigh held up his hand.

"Sit down, please," he said, "and listen." He sat down himself, glancing from one to the other, and finally fixing his eyes on William's downcast face. "I hate to butt into other people's affairs," he said simply. "Mr. Carter, I think you know I'm not a meddler?"

Mr. Carter nodded grimly. He, too, was looking at William.

"We all respect and love you, colonel," cried Mrs. Carter tremulously; "but—you know William's had a terrible time."

"I know it, madam. Far be it from me to belittle it. But the other day Virginia found Fanchon out at Quantah's. Do you know the place?" He glanced again at Mr. Carter. "It's wretched. William's wife was there, ill and penniless. My granddaughter went in to see her, and while she was there Fanchon went out of her head and fainted in Jinny's arms. I think you all know Jinny. She paid the poor girl's bills—"

"I offered her money, I've tried to send her money," William broke in hoarsely. "I didn't know where she was."

The colonel nodded.

"I understand that. She told Jinny she wouldn't take your money. She told her story—in a way—to Jinny. She admitted that she loved you still, that she had always loved you. You were the only good man who had ever loved her, she said. Then she fainted. Jinny sent for Dr. Barbour. It happened that your brother Dan was over there. He came back with Lucas. I was out, and he and Jinny brought Fanchon to our house. He had been looking for Fanchon. He had guessed that she hadn't any money, and he wanted to pay Jinny back for the expenses. He's shared our watch over Fanchon, but"—the colonel smiled—"he wouldn't interfere. That's what he said. So Jinny sent me. Fanchon has been out of her head, and all night, sometimes all day, she's calling you, William. Her pride, her poor little hurt pride, took her away, but now she calls and calls." The colonel rose quietly and took up his hat. "I think that's all. I came to tell you. She's suffered, and she saved Leigh; but if you feel you can't forgive her—"

Mrs. Carter was crying.

"Oh, Johnson, I think we ought to go," she said.

Mr. Carter said nothing, but glanced silently at William. So did the colonel.

"William," said the latter gravely, "Jinny said, 'Tell William that Fanchon loves him as few women love, and she's calling him!' She lies there, quite out of her head still, William, calling and calling to her husband."

Mrs. Carter got up and put on her hat.

"I'm coming with you, colonel," she sobbed. "I've felt it was all wrong. We were hard on her, poor girl!"

"No, mother, I'll go," said William. "It's my business. I'm going with you, colonel."

The colonel straightened himself.

"Thank God!" he said simply.

He was aware that Mr. Carter, red and out of breath, was being urged into his coat and hat by his wife. He was to take them all, then. It was lucky he had brought the wagonette instead of the old rockaway.

The wagonette was waiting outside under the shadow of a tree, the horses carefully netted, and Lucas wearing a brown linen coat and a big straw hat. Colonel

Denbigh helped Mrs. Carter up the high steps and they started, the colonel and Mr. Carter on one side and Mrs. Carter and William on the other.

Facing each other thus, an awkward silence fell, broken only by the heavy tread of the horses' hoofs. They were almost half-way out there before the colonel thought of anything to say.

"The oats came on well this year, Carter," he remarked at last, with forced cheerfulness. "Fine crop!"

Mr. Carter, whose feet still felt several sizes too large for his shoes, let his misery loose.

"I wouldn't give a cent for the oat-crop," he said bluntly. "I'm not a horse."

The colonel, startled for a moment, exploded into laughter, but Mrs. Carter was shocked.

"Oh, Johnson!" she gasped, and then, anxious to propitiate the colonel, she plunged in desperately. "It's been such a beautiful year," she said. "I don't think I ever remember a season when things held so well. Nothing looks rusty yet."

The colonel rubbed his chin.

"Except old men, madam," he remarked with a twinkle.

She laughed tremulously, winking back her tears.

"I feel like an old woman, colonel."

He shook his head, but his eyes were not on her. They had passed on to her son.

William, flushed and silent, sat with his eyes down. The colonel, sharply aware of the tension in the air, wondered. Could Jinny make this lummox see? At the thought of Jinny the old man's eyes lighted, and he looked ahead toward his own gates. They stood open, and he could see the old ginkgo-tree beside the door, already turning yellow as gold in the sun. The horses turned placidly, the wheel grated slightly on the stone curb, and they were going up the drive to the house.

"She's in the west room," said the colonel, glancing toward two windows where the shutters were half closed. "We got a nurse the second night. I wasn't willing to have Jinny wear herself out. She was up with her for twenty-four hours on a stretch."

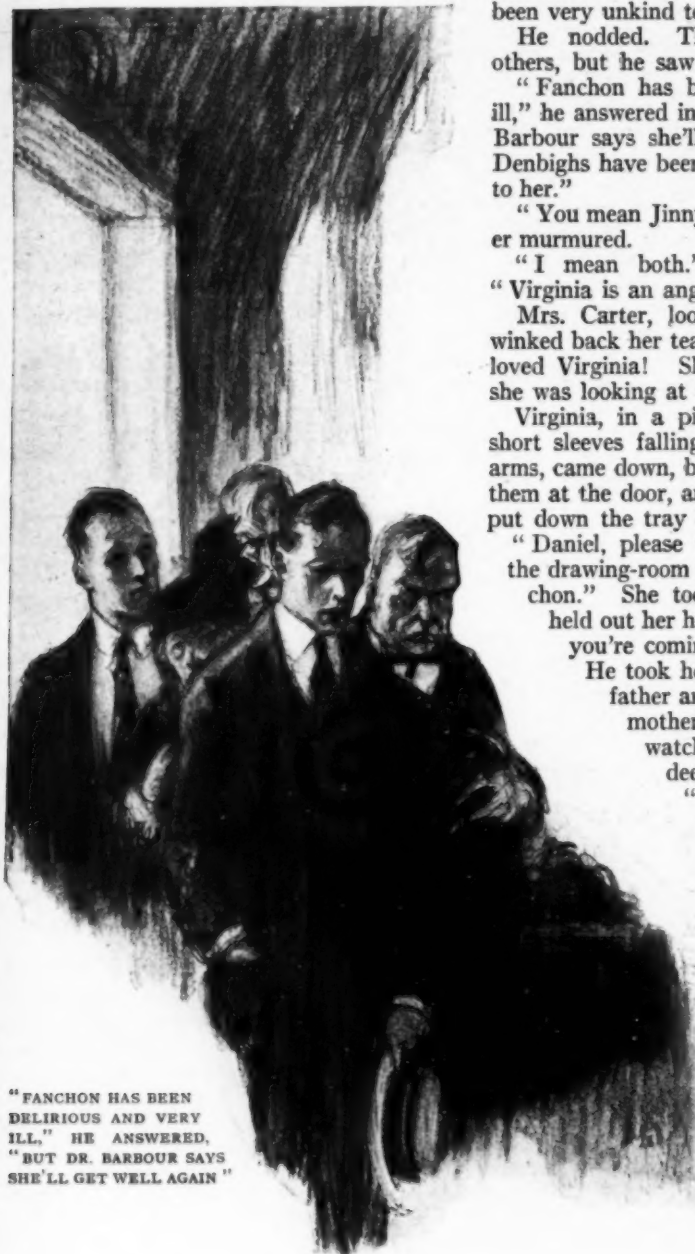
Mrs. Carter made an inarticulate sound, glancing at William in a frightened way, but no one spoke until the wagonette stopped at the door. Daniel Carter came down the piazza steps to meet them.

"She's better," he said soberly. "Virginia thinks she knows her."

His mother clung to his hand as he helped her out.

"Oh, Dan, why didn't you tell us?" she whispered.

He glanced grimly at William.



"FANCHON HAS BEEN DELIRIOUS AND VERY ILL," HE ANSWERED. "BUT DR. BARBOUR SAYS SHE'LL GET WELL AGAIN"

"I thought it was no use, mother."

She knew what he meant, and she, too, glanced at William. He was following Colonel Denbigh up the steps, but his face was set and hard.

"What is it, Dan? How is she really?" his mother asked anxiously. "I felt so ashamed when the colonel told us. We've been very unkind to her, Dan."

He nodded. They were behind the others, but he saw Virginia on the stairs.

"Fanchon has been delirious and very ill," he answered in a low voice; "but Dr. Barbour says she'll get well again. The Denbighs have been most noble, most kind to her."

"You mean Jinny, I suppose," his mother murmured.

"I mean both." His eyes softened. "Virginia is an angel!"

Mrs. Carter, looking at him, suddenly winked back her tears. She knew now—he loved Virginia! She patted his arm, but she was looking at the stairs.

Virginia, in a pink morning gown, the short sleeves falling away from her white arms, came down, bearing a tray. She saw them at the door, and she blushed, but she put down the tray before she spoke.

"Daniel, please take your mother into the drawing-room and tell her about Fanchon." She took a step forward and held out her hand. "William, I hope you're coming with me?" she said.

He took her hand, aware that his father and Colonel Denbigh, his mother and Daniel, were all watching. His blush was deeper than hers.

"I came because you sent for me, Virginia," he replied in a hard, level tone.

Virginia's hand fell at her side. For a moment she looked at him in silence; then she turned.

"Come," she said in a low voice.

William followed her up the wide old stairs, moving slowly, only aware of the humiliation

he felt. After ascending the last flight Virginia stood before an open door and beckoned. He came to her side.

"Listen!" she whispered.

"William!"

He started. He knew the voice—it was Fanchon's.

"William!" she called again, and the light, hurrying voice went on—sometimes in French, sometimes in English, but always repeating the cry, "William!"

"It's like that all day," said Virginia. "She calls and calls you. It's pitiful, William, and it's beautiful—she loves you so!"

He raised his dull eyes slowly from the floor to Fanchon's face. What he saw there made him draw a deep breath of pain.

He stepped into the room. The light was dim, but he saw the face on the pillow and the soft, dark, wildly disheveled hair. Fanchon lay there, tossing, moving her hands restlessly, her fawnlike eyes brilliant and vacant, her small white face tear-stained, and her lips moving, whether words came or not.

While her husband stood there, his head bowed, just inside the door, she began to speak again in rambling and broken sentences.

"William! I'm not bad—I've never been bad—*non, non!* You can't threaten me—I won't stand it; I'll call my husband—William, William!"

She sat up in bed, and tears ran down her cheeks. She seemed to be looking at Virginia, who still stood in the door.

"I didn't do wrong—I loved him.

You sha'n't take him away—

I love him—William!"



SHE SAW
THEM AT THE
DOOR, AND SHE
BLUSHED; BUT SHE

PUT DOWN THE TRAY BEFORE SHE SPOKE

William listened, and it seemed to him as if his own heart stopped beating. The soft, appealing voice and the white, pitiful face of his girl wife! He felt a sudden sensation of suffocation.

"*Guillaume de mon cœur!* He'll come," cried Fanchon softly.

William took a quick step forward, hesitated, and then went across the room. He knelt beside the bed and caught the trembling, groping little hands in his and held them.

Virginia went quietly out of the room and shut the door behind her.

XXVII

WHEN Virginia came down-stairs she heard the pleasant jingle of ice in the drawing-room. Plato was serving iced tea, there being no occasion in life, not even a funeral, when refreshments were not served; but Mr. Carter and her grandfather were the only tea-drinkers. Mrs. Carter was sitting in the corner, surreptitiously wiping her eyes, and Daniel was walking up and down on the rear piazza. Virginia heard his restless tramp as she crossed the hall and stood for a moment in the drawing-room door. They all looked up at her, and Plato discreetly withdrew, bearing his tray.

"How is she, Jinny?" the colonel asked quietly, setting aside his glass of tea.

"I think she knew him," Virginia answered simply, and then, ignoring the two men, she went over to Mrs. Carter. "You were good to come," she said softly.

"Oh, Virginia!" Mrs. Carter dabbed at her eyes, "I feel as if I'd been guilty." She lowered her voice and added in a whisper: "What did William say?"

Virginia smiled, a beautiful light in her eyes.

"I think he's forgiven her already," she replied sweetly. "I've been with her for hours and hours, and I'm fond of her. I can't help it. She's like a child, Mrs. Carter, and she loves William. Besides, she's suffered terribly, and don't you think suffering expiates everything?"

Mrs. Carter pressed her handkerchief against her lips. For a moment she was silent, aware of her husband's eyes and Colonel Denbigh's. Involuntarily they looked at her. She wavered a little, and then she spoke, faint-heartedly but sincerely.

"Johnson, I think we ought to go upstairs, too. We ought to tell William how we feel—at least, I should. I'm ready to do anything that's right."

Mr. Carter nodded his head slowly.

"I've just told the colonel that we're not really monsters," he replied bluntly;

"but we've had rather a rough experience, take it all in all. I reckon we were hard on her. William used to call her a wild fawn. Maybe, if we'd met her from the first in the right way, she'd have tamed down."

Colonel Denbigh pulled at his mustache.

"Give her a little love, Carter, and trust in the Lord," he advised gently.

It was Virginia, however, who solved the problem.

"William must take her away," she said decidedly. "She's used to big cities, to life and light and change, and she couldn't endure us here. It will be a long time before she can. If he takes her away, they'll understand each other, Mrs. Carter, and then the rest of it will solve itself."

Mrs. Carter assented to this. It came to her in the nature of manna from heaven. To mend William's marriage and to escape the responsibility of Fanchon would be almost too good to be true.

"I reckon that's just it, Jinny," she said weakly. "It's all wrong for two young people to start in together with another family. We're right set in our ways, too. I think you're right. Don't you, papa?"

Mr. Carter nodded again. There was a little pause, broken only by the distant sound of Daniel's march on the piazza.

"Isn't that boy coming in here to sit down and drink some tea?" Mr. Carter demanded suddenly.

"I'll call him," said Virginia.

But as she spoke they heard a step on the stairs and William's voice.

"Mother, will you come up and see—my wife?"

Mrs. Carter rose, with a gasp, glancing at her husband. She met assent in his eyes, and she hurried out into the hall. William stood there, his face changed and softened, but still very pale. His eyes met his mother's, and he held out his hand.

"She's come out of her delirium. She knows me—and she wants to ask your forgiveness," he said in a low voice.

Mrs. Carter clung to his arm, lifting her face to his.

"Oh, Willie!" she sobbed, and kissed him.

The colonel and Mr. Carter saw the mother and son going up-stairs together.

"It's all right," said the colonel with manifest relief. "I'm mighty glad of it!"

Mr. Carter made no reply, but lifted his glass of iced tea slowly to his lips and drank it. He felt choked. He was registering a

silent vow that, whatever happened, Emily shouldn't paint her eyelashes!

Virginia, smiling at her grandfather, slipped quietly out of the room. She stood for a moment in the wide, cool hall, listening. She could hear the faint murmur of voices above her, and the tramp of Daniel's nervous feet. Outside the door the warm sunshine seemed to pulsate, and a thousand little gnats danced in a circle in mid air. Virginia crossed the hall softly and stood in the door.

Daniel, very pale and quiet, stopped his marching up and down. His eyes met hers with a silent interrogation.

"It's all right, Dan," she said gently. "William just called your mother. It's made up."

Daniel drew a deep breath, his eyes on her face. He thought he had never seen Virginia look so beautiful.

"It's God's doing, Dan," she replied gravely.

He said nothing. He was still gazing at



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"It's your doing, Virginia," he said softly.

She smiled and shook her head as she stepped through the doorway and stood beside him in the sunshine.

her. She looked so beautiful and so happy that he wondered if, after all, she cared for William. Then he reflected that angels must always look beautiful in acts of love and renunciation.

There was a moment's silence. Then Virginia turned and smiled at him again.

"Let's walk down to the end of the gar-

den," she said gently. "It's cool there under the old mulberry."

They walked slowly, not because of his lameness, for he was limping very little today, but because the walk through the old garden paths was sweet.

"My roses are still blooming," remarked Virginia. "I'm going to set out some more of these late ones this autumn. How sweet the air is to-day!"

He looked up at the clear sky. Only a few white clouds floated in the deep, ineffable blue.

"It's a heavenly day," he said.

They were silent after that, walking between the hedgerows, until they came to a grassy slope that was left to go wild, because Virginia loved wild flowers. Here, in the spring, were pink anemones and bloodroot, and now there were little yellow flowers on what seemed to be green blades of grass.

They sat down together on a fallen tree, which had been left lying there for a seat. Daniel looked down at the little yellow stars in the grass.

"Aren't they pretty things?" he said musingly. "At first I thought this was only common turf, but it's full of yellow stars."

Virginia, following his eyes, smiled.

"They call that star-grass, Dan."

"Star-grass?" he repeated thoughtfully.

"It's a pretty name, Virginia. Do you know why I was looking at it? Those little stars are everywhere like tiny points of flame—and they are all around your feet, little flames of incense."

"There's a legend," she replied, "that those little stars were fastened on the blades of grass so that the humble things of earth, which couldn't look so high as heaven, could see the stars in the grass. Isn't it a quaint idea?"

Daniel nodded, leaning his chin on the hands that clasped the top of his walking-stick, and looking at them, something grim and sad coming into his face.

"I saw a white-breasted nuthatch yesterday in that tree," said Virginia dreamily.

He did not reply, and there was such a long silence that she turned and looked at him. She saw how pale he had grown, how

the delicate hollows had fallen in his cheeks, and the shadows under his eyes. Daniel's eyes were beautiful, she thought—like a woman's in their clear kindness. Perhaps it was the pain he had borne for so many years after his hurt.

"Virginia, if you look at me like that I shall say something," he cried suddenly. "I can't bear it! Turn your eyes away, Virginia."

She laughed a little tremulously, blushing, too.

"But why, Dan? A cat may look at a king, you know."

He did not answer for a while. He was digging little holes in the soft turf with his stick.

"A cripple can't speak," he said at last. "A cripple can't tell a woman what he feels, even when that woman is an angel of compassion."

"But you're not a cripple, Dan. You're only a little lame. It grows less, too, every day."

"I overheard father once," Daniel replied bitterly. "He called me a cripple. 'No girl wants a cripple,' he said."

"Oh, how cruel!" Virginia cried. "And it's not true, Dan; it's not true at all!"

Daniel started, looking around at her, but her face was averted. He only saw her charming profile against the beauty of the foliage behind her. Something in it—something tender and sympathetic—reached him. He drew a long breath.

"Virginia, you can't mean—"

She said nothing, but she lifted her eyes a little shyly to his face; and this time Daniel could not resist the look.

"You can't mean that you'd marry me!" he cried, and then softly, with infinite tenderness: "Will you, Virginia?"

"Yes, Dan," she answered, smiling.

Her smile seemed to change his whole world for him, and to fill it with an ineffable tenderness and light. It was no longer the sweet whistling of a robin that he heard, but the music of the spheres. The very ground was carpeted with stars—with tiny stars that ran like little flames all the way to Virginia's feet, for—like the humble things of earth—Daniel had found his bit of heaven there.

THE END

NOTE—The motion-picture and dramatic rights of "The Wild Fawn," which is concluded in this issue, have been secured by the Vera McCord Productions, Inc. There will be an early presentation upon the screen, followed by a stage version.